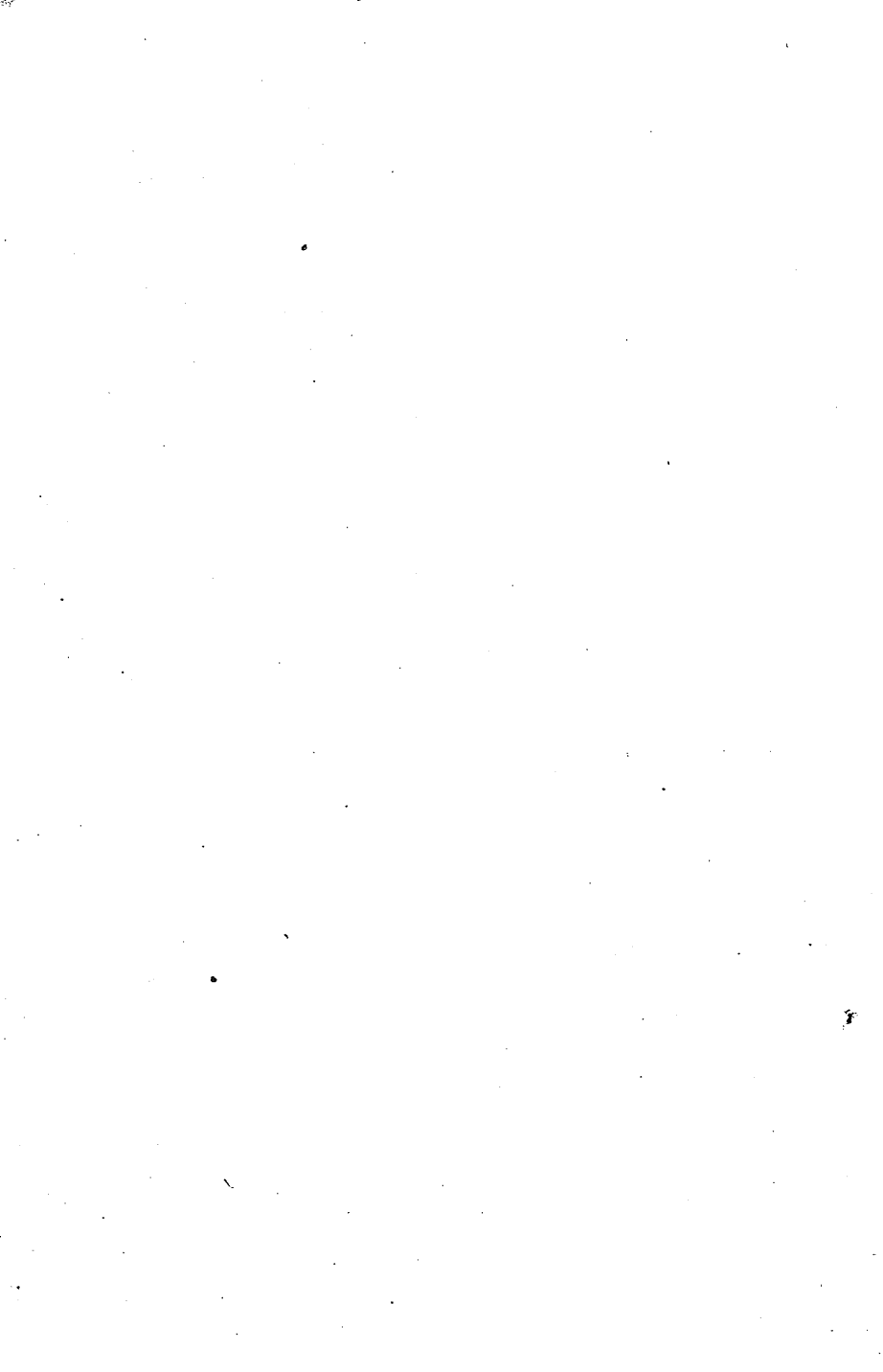


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PROBLEMS
OF CHURCH UNITY

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MONUMENTS OF THE EARLY CHURCH
(title of the English edition, 'Christian Art and Archæology'). In the series of *Handbooks of Archæology and Antiquities*. Crown 8vo. The Macmillan Company, New York; Macmillan and Co., London and Bombay. 1901.

THE CHURCH AND ITS ORGANIZATION IN PRIMITIVE AND CATHOLIC TIMES.
8vo. Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, London, and Bombay. 1904.

GAUDIUM CRUCIS: A Meditation for Good Friday. 12mo. Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, London, and Bombay. 1905.

ABBA FATHER: A Comment on the Lord's Prayer. 12mo. Longmans, Green, and Co., London, New York, and Bombay. 1908.

PROBLEMS OF CHURCH UNITY

BY

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P R E F A C E

Eighteen years have elapsed since the publication of a book of mine entitled *The Church and its Organization*. I was perhaps over scrupulous in describing that book on the title page as "An Interpretation of Rudolph Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*". For it contained manifestly a great deal of matter which had no connection with the German author; and Professor Sohm for his part wrote to me at once to say, "Your work is by no means merely an 'interpretation' of my book: it is an original creation. Your agreement with me in the main thesis has all the greater worth on account of the independent way in which you handle both the historical and the theoretical questions. The precision of your conceptions and the lucidity of your exposition will surely avail to carry the truth to wider circles."

The expectation expressed in the last sentence has hardly been realized. In the English-speaking world my book has had hardly any influence upon current theories about the Church. This is deplorable. I can say it without arrogance, for my book contains enough of Sohm to render it worthy of

attention. It is hardly possible that on the continent of Europe any serious study of early Church organization could now be made without taking account of Sohm's work. But in England and America, during the thirty years which have elapsed since Sohm's book was published, no one in writing on this subject has taken cognizance of it, so far as I am aware, except Principal Lindsay, in his work on *The Church and the Ministry* which was published in 1902, and more, incidentally, Mc Giffert and Schmiedel. No author, so far as I know, has heartily adopted this theory except Rawlinson (in the Appendix to Essay VIII, in the volume entitled *Foundations*, 1920), who also makes gracious acknowledgment of indebtedness to sections of my book which are by no means dependent upon Sohm, and gives in brief space a just idea of the development of early Church organization. No one has apologized for neglecting it except Bishop Gore, in the last edition of his *Christian Ministry* (1919), revised by Professor Turner, which was originally published in 1889, before Sohm's work had appeared. Lightfoot's notable work and Hatch's striking theory are of earlier date. So far as the last thirty years are concerned, the writers who occasionally turn their attention to the subject of Church organization seem to be marking time. I have seen nothing that I can regard as a valuable contribution to this study, except an article by Professor Turner which justly discriminates between the various notions of "succession" which prevailed, one after the other, during the first three centuries. All the old divergencies of opinion still persist, but they are maintained wearily and received with scepticism. No one has faith that a new point of view might be found which would synthesize the old oppositions.

It is symptomatic that one of the most recent publications in this field, a collection of essays by members of the Church of England, advocates several different and antipodal theories. One writer sees no way out of his perplexity but a return to the position of Lightfoot, while another clings to the Hatch-Harnack hypothesis, — in spite of the fact (and doubtless in ignorance of it) that Professor Harnack, as the result of a long controversy with Sohm, has ended by accepting almost all the major points this author has contended for, except his *absolute* denial of the pertinence of law to the Church.

With a view to the necessity of reunion, Bishop Gore has urged that the problems of Church organization be discussed impartially from a new point of view. "I want to know", he says, "whether we cannot go back to the beginning and ask ourselves what really is the mind of Christ and what really were the intentions of His first interpreters with regard to the unity of the Church. I want to know whether we can start afresh and whether we can in any way agree as to what we mean by the Church and by the unity of the Church." It would seem to me as if Sohm's book (and mine) were the precise fulfilment of this requirement. No one can approach the subject from this new point of view without perceiving that the old denominational controversies about Church organization were irrelevant and that the newer theories are either false or inadequate. This new point of view which makes a clean sweep of all the old controversies might prove to be the very thing that Dr. Gore so much desires. But it is vain to desire a new thing so long as one is resolved to welcome no novelty.

I have some reason to believe that a chapter

in which I traced the history of "Denominational Controversy" about the form of the Christian ministry was not written altogether in vain. For it came to my knowledge some years ago that Dr. Patton, then President of the Princeton Theological Seminary, at a moment when the faculty was debating how best to fill the vacant chair of Church Polity, proposed rather to abolish that chair, alleging as a reason that my book had convinced him of the impossibility of defending the *iure divino* character of the Presbyterian form of Church government. Thereupon the Professor of Dogmatic and Polemical Theology arose to affirm that the form of government was an integral part of the Calvinistic faith. Consequently the chair was maintained, but an incumbent was found who had no intention of maintaining its traditions. In fact, these old controversies are dead. The various Protestant schemes of Church government which once were defended as existing by divine right and by the will and authority of Jesus Christ are so defended no longer. But they still exist *de facto*, and the theories on which they were founded cannot be swept out of the way until they are superseded by a view which can claim concordant assent. In our present despair of any such concord no way seems open for the *rapprochement* of divided Christendom. It looks as if we must be content with an arbitrary *modus vivendi*: either a federation of the divers systems which now exist; or a composition of them all which would compromise the small authority they now severally possess. Our present scepticism about the whole matter makes us indisposed to enquire whether certain principles are not indicated by the very idea of the Church, and renders us incapable of perceiving that the form which the Church first assumed in

history was the natural and distinctive expression of its spirit, — as appropriate to it as is the human body to the human soul.

Dr. Patton was pleased to think I had demolished the claims of episcopacy as thoroughly as those advanced for the Presbyterian system. But that was a misapprehension, natural to one who is ready to recognize no authoritative norms for the Church except such as can be demonstrated in the Apostolic age. Both the name and the office of the bishop were primitive, but his functions were certainly not in all respects identical throughout the first three centuries. It is no disparagement of episcopacy to acknowledge that it is an institution which grew. Without ascribing divine authority to the institutions of the second century one is obliged to study them, if only for the sake of finding a clue to the problem of Church government in the Apostolic age. The casual references to this subject in the New Testament do not suffice to illuminate this problem, and any reconstruction which is made on this evidence alone must issue in a fantastic dogma or in scepticism. At all events, any reconstruction of the primitive age which renders unintelligible the Catholic order which emerged into clear light before the end of the second century stands self-condemned. On the other hand, an historical account which explains the Catholic development goes far towards justifying it. Sohm's thesis does, it seems to me, justify the Catholic emphasis upon the authority of the ministry, and it logically issues in the affirmation that, if law of any sort be compatible with the idea of the Church, it can only be a *divine* law which presumes to regulate Church life everywhere according to a universal norm. Even where there is no law this ideal is a compelling motive

to conformity. But more compelling than any theory is the Catholic order which prevailed universally in Christendom at so early a date. The notion that the Church can ever be united with any other order is not a practical proposition, Whosoever really desires unity must desire it upon these terms. It is vain to wish the end without willing the means.

That earlier book of mine of which I have been speaking contains much that bears upon the subject of reunion, but because it was not written expressly with this aim in view it was so far forth written in vain. Yet I cannot be sorry that I wrote that book as I did. It still seems to me a true book. There is no part of it that I now condemn except the section which treats of Jesus' idea of the Church in relation to the kingdom of God. That was written before there had dawned upon me the light of "thorough-going eschatology." And there is no other amendment of any importance I would now make, except to mitigate the absoluteness of the affirmation that there can be no law in the Church. Not that I would impeach the abstract truth of that proposition; but I would soften the paradox, rendering it less unacceptable, less unintelligible, by pointing out more clearly than I there did the practical and ideal necessity of order and conformity. No, on the whole I am not sorry that I wrote that book as I did. For if it had not been written, with a wearisome abundance of notes and proofs and citations, I could not now venture to write as I do here, with only so much proof as is necessary for the practical purpose I have in view, with an aim not so much to convince as to persuade, and in terms so simple that they must be plain to the meanest intelligence. The earlier work may not be found any longer at the booksellers, yet I can regard it

as a book in being, and in order to avoid the offence of many foot-notes I refer to it here as a whole in proof of such matters as may seem not sufficiently proved in this present work.

Of this present work, however, only a small part coincides with the earlier book I have been speaking about, — hardly more than the two chapters which are entitled, “The Idea of the Church,” and, “A Common Ministry,” — and the different aim I have here in view prescribes a new treatment of these themes. Very emphatically, I do not place the question of organization *first* among the problems of Church unity; and if I allot to the discussion of it a disproportionate space, it is for the reason that it involves the consideration of many historical details and the refutation of several ancient and modern errors. At all events, if the question of organization does not deserve the first place (as many conceive that it does) in the discussion of Church unity, it remains nevertheless one of the chief obstacles to reunion and derives from this fact a fictitious importance. If the form of Church order might be made a means of expressing and cementing Christian unity, it would attain an importance of a higher sort. I have given to this theme the attention it deserves from either point of view (as a formal obstacle to unity or as formal expression of it); but I have stressed far more the importance of the substantial unity which is attained in common prayer, and I have considered at great length (and, it may be thought, with too much detail) the difficulties in the way of attaining it, whether in the ordinary assemblies for worship or at the Holy Communion. I do not rank so high the importance of a common creed as an expression of unity; but unity in faith and love is

very clearly fundamental, and in placing this consideration last I do not mean to minimize its importance. The last place is plainly a position of emphasis.

Rome, June 20th, 1923.

WALTER LOWRIE.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Church unity involves four principal factors: Faith, Love, Prayer, and Order. It would be foolish to inquire which comes first in importance, for they are co-ordinates. There can be no real unity in Christendom without a common faith ("the substance of things hoped for"), without a uniting love (as "the bond of peace" and also as an incentive to good works), without common prayer, or without a common ministry, — which is not the same thing as uniformity of organization. All of these things must be sought after: not one can be lacking in the perfect unity. The common ministry may appear to be ideally a less exalted factor than the others, but its practical importance gives it more abundant honour.

At the most we may ask which must first be sought after in point of time, as a matter of tactical prudence. And in part the answer to this question depends upon the precise character of the disunion which we hope to resolve. Compendiously these four factors can be described as "Faith and Order". It is commonly assumed that the differences which separate the various Protestant denominations come chiefly under the head of Order, whereas

the differences which divide Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Anglicans have chiefly to do with the Faith. It seems plausible therefore to infer that for the healing of Protestant divisions we had best apply ourselves first of all to the settlement of differences with respect to Order, meaning by that primarily the organization of the ministry, and secondarily the form of common worship. But it is possible to feel some doubt about this method of approach. Does it not seem too mechanical as a method? and would it not prove merely mechanical in the result, if ever it were brought about? Moreover we are compelled to acknowledge that in this way nothing of importance has yet been accomplished, in spite of the considerable effort which has been expended during a long period of time. It is obvious that the mechanism of the Churches, by reason of inertia and friction, offers a very stubborn resistance to change, which the motive power hitherto applied has not been adequate to overcome.

The motive power — that is what is lacking, in fact. And that is not to be sought under the head of Order. It is to be found, if anywhere, among the factors which are summarily comprehended under the other caption; for “Faith”, according to this dichotomy, must include also love and that part of prayer which is too inward and essential to be grouped with order and formality. Evidently in this field lies the defect. The assumption that Christians are already united in faith and hope and love, and lack only a formal expression of their unity, will not bear investigation. It might be said that all Christians are essentially united by the fact that they all pray to God through Christ. However, it is still more obvious and certain that they are profoundly disunited by the fact that they are unable to pray in common. That the separated

communions are united by love for one another, no man can honestly affirm. And charity towards the needy, if indeed it unites us, unites us equally with Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics. As for hope, it is notorious that the personal expectation of immortality has been weakened by the vagueness and divergency of the views which are entertained about it; and where do we find agreement about the meaning of the Kingdom of God? — the term by which Jesus described the universal destiny of the world. A man might make a specious plea that all Christians (or almost all) are still united in the *essentials* of the faith. But, if we accept Leibnitz' dictum that "A single error of thought logically leads to the denial of God", we may see reason to suspect that those parts of the historical confessions of faith of the various denominations which are obviously discrepant but which we now agree to regard as unessential must variously modify the essential phrases of the creed. The phrases which we regard as essential in the Apostles Creed or in the Nicene cannot be unaffected by this context. Or to take an example more ancient, more central, and more authoritative: "The *love* of God, the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the *communion* of the Holy Spirit" cannot mean the same in the Calvinistic theology and in the Catholic. But, it may be said, we have changed all that: the historical confessions of faith do not any longer represent the belief of the constituents of the several denominations. That is true, and it is comforting . . . up to a certain point. The different denominations of Protestantism, having discarded their historical peculiarities, are really very much alike and might be ready to formulate a common creed which would contain faiths and phrases which the present vogue counts "essential." In

spite of that, everyone will be free to think as he pleases, as everyone now does. The denominations can be described as being all of one colour because each is party-coloured.

Each is party-coloured, and yet it must be confessed that there is a uniting tint . . . of dull drab. There can be no doubt that if a paper vote were taken to ascertain what is the essence of Christianity, an overwhelming majority would give its suffrage for the popular phrase, "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man." This is regarded as being at once the differentium of Protestantism and the essence of Christianity. It cannot logically be both. In fact it is neither. It is the common element in all the higher religions. Hence it is not so strange that this belief in which all are united fails to unite. It did not avail to unite the world before Christ, and it has no tendency to unite Christendom. This may be regarded as God's primary revelation of himself to the world. It was implicit in the fact that he made man in his own image. The second (if we may not say final) revelation was made in the fulness of time when God himself became man. That is a fact which unites men. Even as a belief it has a tendency to unite, inasmuch as it promises the deification of man, and fixes now our attention, not retrospectively upon the unity of human origin, but upon the common expectation of a divine destiny.

The doctrine of the Incarnation is so stupendous a thing that either it must be regulative of all our thinking ("Solve for thee all questions in the world and out of it"), or it must be resolutely extruded from our thought. It is more reasonable to deny it than to deny it the first place among the essentials of Christianity. It is not something additional to belief in God and less essential than that: it is our belief in God in terms of the most perfect

revelation that has been vouchsafed to us. It is therefore at once the most outstanding differentium of Christianity and the essence of religion. In Christendom it is the uniting doctrine. If it appear divisive, as to many it must, it is not *within* the Church that it divides men.

The efforts which are now being made to unite Christendom are wisely limited to such denominations as profess the "orthodox," *i. e.* the Trinitarian, faith. We cannot but wonder, however, how many of the individuals who adhere to these denominations or churches do actually believe this doctrine. The fashion is, neither to deny it, nor to believe, but to assent. In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity if it is not apprehended as a definition of the Incarnation, is a ridiculous logomachy. When we note, with regard to an individual or a communion of Christians, that the doctrine of the Incarnation does not powerfully affect all other doctrines, and in particular the doctrine of the Church as Christ's Body, the doctrine of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a result of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of the coming of the Holy Ghost as the sequel of it, we are compelled to conclude that this doctrine itself, as if it were a foreign body intruded into the system, has by a self-protective instinct been encisted and rendered inoperative.

If the assumption were justified that Christians, or Protestants at least, are already sufficiently united in the fact that they hold the same essential faith, we should still have reason to wish that there were *more of it*. More, I mean, not by way of extension (more doctrines upon which we were already united), but intensively — what Jesus called a "greater faith". Our faith is not great enough, not hot enough, to unite us, even within the limits of a single denomination. We have not enough faith, not

enough love, not enough of the spirit of prayer. It seems to me no more than a hypocritical civility to affirm, as many do, that each denomination has its own precious gift to contribute to the united Church. In reality we are each too poor to enrich one another. Yet faint embers glow when they are brought together. They glow and finally blaze because of the draught which their union makes possible.

We need a draught, a rushing mighty wind, a revival of religion by the Holy Spirit. We cannot get together until we have it: we cannot have it, perhaps, until we get together. Yet for all that our case is not desperate. If a few have sufficient faith and hope and love and prayerfulness to get together, they may kindle a fire which will warm us all.

These considerations suggest that if Faith, Love, Prayer, and Order are co-ordinate factors in the problem of Church unity or reunion, they are all alike subordinate to the Holy Spirit. Faith, Hope, and Love are spiritual gifts, which experienced by us in common unite us; Prayer is a spiritual exercise; and Order, whether of worship or of administration is a spiritual product, for the Spirit of God is not a spirit of confusion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints. In all this it is a spiritual experience which unites us: in other words it is an experience of the Spirit. The fundamental communion is "the communion of the Holy Spirit", which means, not a solitary intercourse *with* God, not at all a communion *with* the Spirit, but the communion which we have with one another in the common experience of the life-giving Spirit.

Here we have arrived at the fundamental thing, which is also an elementary thing. For spiritual regeneration (the new birth) is reckoned by St. John's Gospel among

the "earthly things" inasmuch as it is an experience already open to us now in the days of our flesh, without which it is impossible for us to entertain any expectation of "the heavenly things." Men have much in common with one another as men; formally a man has even much in common with a corpse; but in the deepest sense there is no fellowship between the living and the dead, between the regenerate and the unregenerate. Denominational divisions are hardly felt as barriers between persons who have little in common. A lady who had already been thrice married and wished to contract a new alliance (with a royal imbecile) asked me to solemnize the marriage. When I suggested that she apply rather to the Methodist minister, as one who would likely have no scruples, she surprised me by saying that she was in fact a Methodist, "But not a bigotted one". In this experience I had an illumination: that this woman was not separated from me by reason of her being a Methodist but by the fact that she was not a bigotted Methodist. It is chiefly as between "bigotted" Christians that schism is a tragedy, when by a formal barrier it separates men who have the substance of Christianity in common, when it is a schism *in* the Body, not aside from the Body. But it is also a tragedy in so far as it hinders many from becoming Christians, and hinders us all from becoming better Christians. If now we were good Christians, the formal barriers which separate Rome and Constantinople and Canterbury and Geneva and the followers of Luther and of Wesley would be swept away and even substantial differences would be resolved. The problem of Christian reunion brings us face to face with the need of a revival of religion.

To illustrate our case, Albert Schweitzer somewhere

uses a figure which is striking enough to remain in my memory, though his very words I cannot recall. In a season of drought a mountain torrent which has reached the plain makes its way deviously in separated rivulets among the rocks and boulders of its broad bed. To remove one by one the stones which choke its passage and divide its streams were a hopeless undertaking. But when the rains fall upon the highlands and the snows melt upon the peaks there comes again a season of refreshing which accomplishes what a while ago seemed incredible; the tiny rivulets are united in one majestic stream which submerges the greatest boulders and sweeps on to the sea.

Where but in prayer can we tap the floods which will unite the trickles of religious life? We must pray for the perfection of the Church as we pray for the Kingdom. This is not man's work, it is for God to do. Since it is God's work, do ye well to be faithless? When all we dare hope for is the "Federation" of Protestant denominations, we may hear Jesus chiding us as men of "little faith." When we say, "But not with Rome" (half wishing that what we say might be true), we might hear the authentic voice of Jesus, saying, "With man it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." Without this confidence it is impossible to pray, and prayer is the chief part we have to perform.

This is not to say that there remains nothing else for us to do. We must each of us strive to free our minds from cant. It is as an aid to such a catharsis that this book is written. We must earnestly seek the truth, or at least be ready to welcome it, even if it is unfamiliar. As a propaedeutic to prayer we must purify our desires, direct them aright, and vivify them. For it is idle to pray for what we do not desire, and the fervency of our desire is

a measure of the efficacy of our prayer. When in "effectual fervent prayer" we *unite* in asking for the union of all the holy Churches of God, we have already received in part the petition we have asked for. For to be united in prayer is to be truly united.

A PRAYER FOR UNITY

O God, who hast created all things and hast revealed unto us thine eternal purpose to unite all men in Christ, to the end that through the Church thy manifold wisdom might be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places; grant that the whole company of Christ's disciples may be united in brotherly love to fulfil this glorious mission, and that they may recognize one another as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. Pour out now, we beseech thee, thy Holy Spirit upon thy Church in all its branches, so that the obstacles to godly union and concord may be swept away as with a flood, and that we may glorify thee with one heart and with one mouth in proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. To him be the glory forever.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

In this chapter we are confronted with a crucial question. There is no other point so critical for Christian unity, if this is to be understood as involving *Church* unity. We have to enquire what the Church is, and upon the result of this inquiry everything depends. If we cannot agree upon a definition of the Church, we can go no further together in the quest of Church unity.

At this point we need not seek to describe the perfect or fully developed Church, but have simply to discover what the Church is in its essential idea.

It would not be necessary to insist so much upon the importance of this inquiry if the word Church were not used even more inconsistently than the generality of words. Luther thought it best to discard "the blind and uncertain word Church (*Kirche*)". In his translation of the Old Testament he used it only for idolatrous temples, and in the New Testament he substituted for it the word congregation (*Gemeinde*). His example influenced the English versions down to the end of Henry VIII's reign, and this translation held its ground, even in so primary a passage as Mt. 16: 18, till the Jacobean revision of 1611 (the

so-called Authorized Version). This effort to abolish an ambiguous word ultimately failed in Germany as it did in England, and the Puritan plan for doing away with the ambiguity by distinguishing scrupulously the "meeting house" from the congregation has had no lasting effect except among the Quakers. The purpose was good, but the distinction was in fact topsy-turvy; for it seems that the English word originally denoted the house of the Lord rather than the congregation. The New Testament word *Ecclesia* was originally appropriated exclusively to the congregation of God's people; but even this term, in Greek and Latin and in the derived tongues, came ultimately to be used for the house of worship, the *domus ecclesiae*. Every attempt to invert the process which brought this usage about and to limit again the reference of the word Church exclusively to the people of God is foredoomed to failure. We must, however distinguish between the Church and the house in which it meets, and we must endeavour also to divest our conception of the Church of all the formal implications and local limitations, which belong properly to the *place* where it meets. It is not easy for us to think of the Church spiritually.

The New Testament term *ἐκκλησία* which we translate by the word Church was used by the Septuagint, in most cases, to translate the Hebrew *qahal*, which meant the *Assembly* of the people of God and which is consistently rendered by this word in our Revised Version. The Old Testament distinguishes the Assembly, the actual meeting of the people with God, from the *Congregation* which was accustomed thus to meet. The former word was evidently the more solemn one. After the Exile it seems to have combined the meanings of both words, and its Greek equivalent would naturally mean, for Greek-speaking Jews,

the Congregation of Israel as well as the *Assembly* of the Congregation. It is evident that we would gain nothing by discarding the familiar word Church in favour of either of these terms. The latter has for us associations which are far too formal. The Ecclesia is not a definite local congregation, distinguished from other congregations of Christ's disciples by its location, its roll of membership and its particular organization. It is simply God's people assembled in his presence. On the other hand, the term Assembly fails to express all that we properly mean by the Church. It expresses, indeed, very little to such as see in it no more than a meeting of men with one another. It means a meeting of men with God. The Quakers attach this meaning to it when they speak of the *meeting* and the *meeting-house*. But the word Ecclesia, while it stresses the solemn thought of meeting with God, denotes also the People, the true Israel, which in the interval between one meeting and another does not cease to be the Church, is at all times the Body of Christ, and not merely a Society of Friends

The fact that the word ἐκκλησία was used by the Greeks for the town-meeting, the democratic assembly of citizens, may have helped to give currency to this name among Gentile Christians; but there is no evidence that it perverted the original idea by suggesting a comparison with the state in respect to its democratic character, its legal organization, or its legislative functions. It has been common in modern times to speak of "Church, polity"; but no such expression was used in early times nor is there any hint that the Church was ever conceived to be on the same plane with the Greek πόλις, or with any sort of secular or civil society.

The New Testament provides us with no express

definition of the Church. It is evident that the word was too well known to need definition, that it antedated the earliest of the New Testament documents, was in current use before Paul became a "Christian", and was adopted not later than the first Pentecost as the most apt denomination for the community of Christ's disciples. The Gospels and the Acts are doubtless historically correct in refraining from the use of this word to describe the disciples of Jesus in the days of his flesh; for it was only when he was among them as Spirit, when his presence was known to be the presence of God, that this lofty religious term could be used appropriately.

It may be said that almost the whole of the New Testament is engaged in telling us what the Church is and ought to be, and the word itself occurs so frequently in the Acts and the Epistles that we might expect to find abundant information about its meaning, — as indeed we do. But we are fain to have also some word from Jesus himself describing the nature of his Church, and we are prone to believe that what he says about the Kingdom of God we can apply at once to the Ecclesia. But it is not possible any longer to equate the Kingdom and the Church. Even those who refuse to admit the eschatological character of Jesus' teaching cannot with a good conscience identify the Kingdom and the Church; for if the word Kingdom means nothing more than the divine rule, the will of God become effective upon earth, it is still a larger idea than the Church. St. Paul clearly discriminates between the two, and highly as he exalts the Church, he ascribes to the Kingdom a more transcendent glory. The two conceptions were, in fact, never confounded before the fifth century. The Kingdom of God denotes a perfection of blessedness which is not compatible with man's pres-

ent environment. It represents a heavenly state which "flesh and blood cannot inherit" (1 Cor. 15: 50). Consequently it expects a regenerated cosmos as the fit environment for regenerated men. In the language of Jesus, that is "*the* regeneration" (Mt. 19: 28); in the language of St. Paul it is the completed redemption — "even the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8: 23). But that lies beyond our present life: it is "beyond-man", and equally it is beyond the Church.

The word Church occurs in two passages in the Gospel according to St. Matthew; but they are both "secondary" passages. That is to say, they are not a part of the earliest narrative. They may be true for all that; but we have no convincing assurance of their historicity, and it is certain that some will not be able to accept them. It is not possible for us all to agree upon this point, nor is it necessary. For the first of these passages (Mt. 16: 18) gives no information about the nature of the Church; and the other (Mt. 18: 17) alludes to the disciplinary authority of the Church in terms which are familiar to us from other sources (particularly 1 Cor. 5: 1-7).

The only word anywhere ascribed to Jesus which seems to define the very essence of the Church is found in the "secondary" passage we have just referred to (Mt. 18: 19, 20): "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". Here the Church is described as a prayer meeting, and the assurance that their prayers will be heard and their petitions answered is founded upon the presence of Christ in the midst of them. The context puts it beyond doubt that this saying

applies to the Church, but the fact that the word itself is not used here relieves the latter part of this "secondary" passage of the suspicion of anachronism. I am very much inclined to believe that these words were actually uttered by our Lord. If he said, as is reported in the last verse of St. Matthew's Gospel, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world", he doubtless said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". But even if we should feel compelled to suppose that every expression of this kind, so characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, which looks forward to Christ's presence with his disciples after his bodily death, is an expression rather of the disciples' faith than of our Lord's expectation, these sayings do not thereby lose all their value, for they testify to a faith which was evidently founded upon experience. We discover in them the account which the Church gave of itself. To go back of that, to question the validity of the experience of the earliest disciples, might lead to Christian unity of a sort, in case all were willing to follow this line of criticism; but clearly it would not conduce to *Church* unity, for it would annul the very idea of the Church, emptying out the baby with the bath.

This saying about the "two or three" does in fact describe the very essence of the Church. There are only two factors essential to the Church: a community of Christ's disciples, and his presence in the midst of them. This saying was recast into the terse form of a proverb, *Ubi tres ibi ecclesia* (Where three are there is the Church), and it was current even as late as the end of the second century (1). It represents a primitive conception which

(1) Tertullian, *De exhort. castic.* c. 7; *De baptismo*, c. 6; *De pudic.* 21.

persisted in spite of the Catholic tendency towards legalism. St. Ignatius cites this proverb in a very striking form in a passage which contains the earliest instance we know of the use of the word "catholic" (*Ad Smyrn.* 8: 2), "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church." All will admit that a Church cannot exist without the presence of Christ; but this saying goes far beyond so negative an admission, affirming positively that the Church does exist *wholly* wherever Christ is. This affirmation, which no one will flatly repudiate, explains and justifies Sohm's dictum that there can be no law which defines the Church. He means that the reality of Christ's presence can be proved only by substantial notes, and not by any purely formal criterion. Christ himself prescribed the rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Spiritual "fruits" are not a formal note. But formality is of the essence of law. The Catholic legalist is bound to affirm, not only positively, that Christ is in the Church (which is an expression of faith), but negatively, that wherever certain formal notes are lacking Christ cannot be. He cannot be found apart from the bishop (as St. Ignatius affirmed), or apart from the Pope, or where a certain dogma is lacking, or the proper form of a sacrament is not observed. The legalist would stultify his position were he merely to affirm, as some inconsequently do, that Christ *ought* not to be in such a place or company, admitting at the same time that he may be there, or that he does in fact manifest there his presence by the same operations of the Spirit as elsewhere prove the reality of the Church. This admission implies that the law in question (the formal criterion of reality) does not in fact define the essence of the Church, does not infallibly indicate where it is and where it is not, does not

establish the conditions of its very existence, but, at the most, the concomitants of its perfection. Strictly speaking, this is not ecclesiastical law. Law must be founded upon principles which are universally valid. Ecclesiastical law must be valid for the whole of Christendom, for the whole Church and for every Church. It is either ecumenical law, or it is merely denominational law. And though it affirm a custom which enjoys universal respect and observance, it is not law in the strictest sense if it does not infallibly define the Church. I am not making here a merely theoretical distinction but a very practical one. It corresponds to the distinction between the constitution of a society and its by-laws. An ecclesiastical law which does not define the nature of the Church is only a by-law. But if it is no more than that, it fails to perform the chief function which is expected of it. For it is clear that the development of Church law in its earliest stages was prompted by the need of giving an answer to the urgent query, Where is Christ the Lord of glory, where is the Holy Spirit with all his gifts, where is salvation surely to be found? Under the threat of a heresy which was nothing less than apostasy St. Ignatius gave a prompt and practical answer when he pointed to the Church as it was actually organized in all stable communities: "Where the bishop is, along with the presbyters and deacons", there you may be sure of finding the Church. That practical answer supplies man's moral need for assurance. But if it is theoretically regarded as a legal definition of the Church, it has a negative side. It implies, to use the words of St. Ignatius, that "apart from the bishop there is not even the name of a Church". In making that affirmation, St. Ignatius either denies his own dictum, that "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church"; or he

means to say that Christ cannot be present where the Catholic ministry is lacking. For no one can deny the name of a Church to a meeting where Christ is present. Such a meeting, though it lack all the formal notes of the Church, has all the substance of it. It has all the authority of the Church, if only Christ be in it. No one will presume to affirm that, though Christ is there, he is impotent to effect what he would for lack of the customary organs of the Church; for it is Christ who creates the appropriate organs for his Body. Nor would such a retort seem pertinent in case our plainest reason for inferring the presence of Christ were the manifest working of his grace.

When we look upon any community of men who profess themselves Christians and meet in Christ's name, and we presume to declare that it is not a Church because it lacks certain formal notes which we posit as essential, we affirm in effect that its members are not Christians and are not in the way of eternal life, or else we deny implicitly that the Church is the Ark of salvation. The distinction between the visible and the invisible Church does not deliver us from this dilemma; for this again detracts from the dignity and importance of the visible Church by denying its necessity, while upon the invisible Church (an abstraction which counts for nothing in this world) it heaps all the high attributes which the New Testament ascribes to the visible company of Christ's disciples. It is enough to condemn this distinction to say that it is not Biblical. Two or three who meet together in Christ's name are a *visible* Church, although the spirit of man is no more visible there than is the Spirit of God, and each must be inferred from its effects.

Neither is it satisfactory to regard all baptized persons

as members of the Church, considering them individually and making complete abstraction of the denominational assemblies in which they actually convene and cohere, and which they ingenuously regard as the Church. For essentially the Church is a society, — though it be but of two or three, — and without a meeting in Christ's presence, or even the bare possibility of such a thing, there is no Church. If it is possible to conceive that two or three of these isolated Christians meeting together in prayer might find themselves in the presence of Christ, no one could deny to such a meeting the name of a Church. It would be a real and valid Church in spite of any irregularities of form, and all the notes of legality would prove to be irrelevant to the constitution of the people of God.

This atomic conception of Christianity is very modern. By the Protestant Reformers it would have been regarded with disfavor. Calvin repeated the old adage, "A man cannot have God for his Father if he have not the Church for his Mother." But being modern it is the more sincerely held, and men have a disconcerting way of living up to their belief. The sectarian disintegration of the Church is now being complemented by the disintegration of the denominations into their original atoms. This individualistic tendency threatens a terrible disruption, and there is reason to fear that the individual atoms may not survive it. Yet to me it suggests also a ray of hope. For when it reaches the limit where each man is a denomination all by himself, the social contract which constituted the sect is dissolved, the duties which bound men to it are abrogated, all little loyalties lapse, and automatically each man finds himself a member simply of the Church of God, subject to no law but such as he recognizes as the will of God for the whole of Christendom.

The chief evil of denominationalism (that is, of every legally separate organization of Christianity) does not lie in the fact that separate societies exist *within* the Church, but in the fact that each regards itself as a separate Church, confounding its by-laws with its constitution, and therefore claims for itself the allegiance which is due only to the universal Church of God. But we are fast changing all that. The authority of denominational law is approaching its full eclipse. Hardly any one regards it as *Church* law, — that is, as the will of God for the whole of Christendom, — but merely as denominational law, pertinent to that denomination and to no other. The danger now is that the constitutional law of the Church, being confounded with the by-laws, may suffer the same disparagement. For the legislative machinery by which ecclesiastical law is formulated in all the Protestant Churches is frankly designed, not to ascertain the will of God, but to register the vote of the majority. In this state of affairs the individual Christian (even now, and without repudiating a secondary allegiance to his particular religious society) is free to recognize that his primary allegiance is due to the Body of Christ, of which he is a member, not by reason of his denominational attachment, but *directly*, by reason of his faith and baptism. Whosoever views his position in this light will feel bound to act at all times upon a maxim fit to be law universal in the Church of God. He will be inclined to seek this law wherever God's Spirit is manifested, and not alone in the legislative assembly of his own denomination. He will readily discover what are the constitutional principles of the Church which are worthy to be observed *semper ubique et ab omnibus*; and he will not feel that he is essentially divided from brethren who in other respects follow di-

vergent customs and denominational by-laws. In this way and to this degree the individual for himself can transcend the limitations of denominationalism. It is vain to imagine that they are completely transcended until they are abolished; for most of the practical evils remain, and the formal barriers to fellowship are more sensibly felt the more we are inwardly detached from their tyranny. But it is certain that if all attained this degree of detachment, denominational barriers would be very soon abolished, and I can see no hopeful way of attaining unity but by the conversion of the individual. The disintegration of the denominations and the depreciation of denominational authority is only a negative preparation for this result. Detachment is being attained only too rapidly; and if the individuals thus detached are not converted to another and wider loyalty, we may have Christian union of a sort, but not *Church* unity.

We cannot face the problem of reunion without raising the question of the nature of ecclesiastical law. For the problem itself consists essentially in the fact that there are many rival systems of Church law which stand in the way of union. What authority do they claim for themselves? and what real sanctions have they in this life or in that which is to come? We shall find that in the present decay of denominationalism the Protestant sects ascribe very little authority to their laws and hardly regard them as Church laws, applicable to Christendom as a whole, whereas Catholic law in its fundamental principles claims authority to prescribe where Christ may be and what the Holy Spirit may do.

This distinction is modern. The Protestant communions started with the Catholic conception of ecclesiastical law: they altered its terms by an appeal to Holy Scripture, but

they neither diminished its authority nor the scope of its application. The law which they discovered in God's Word they took to be an expression of God's will, which has absolute authority and universal application. For this reason Protestantism was at first unable to make the distinction which the Roman Church clearly drew between the moral law and ecclesiastical law, and when ultimately it found itself compelled to make this distinction its ecclesiastical law was at once divested of all authority. For there can be no effective sanctions for religious law except those that lie beyond the grave, which none can apply but God, and which presumably he will not apply in conformity with any *human* legislation. Church law which is not regarded as a faithful expression of God's will has no weight. As an expression of human will it has no spiritual authority whatsoever, but only such authority as any secular society can confer upon its statutes or rules of order.

Church law to be authoritative must repose either upon God's revelation of his will or upon our discovery of it. By the discovery of God's will I mean observation and deduction such as we resort to when we seek to ascertain the so-called laws of nature. If Church law were simply the formulation of a rule which we deduce from observation, no one could quarrel with it. It is conceivable that upon the basis of careful observation and a wide experience, extending to remote times and to all parts of Christendom, it could be proved with a high degree of probability by the methods of deductive logic that this or another formal note is essential to the Church, — that where a bishop is lacking, for example, or a pope, or (what the Presbyterians of one time were as zealous to maintain) the "ruling elder" and the "classical presby-

tery", *there* we have no reason to expect that Christ will be found or the gifts of his Spirit will be manifested. This would give us a rule for our guidance which few would be foolish enough to ignore.

It is notorious, however, that our ecclesiastical rules have not been arrived at by any such process. The common criticism of them is based upon the claim that they do not agree with experience and observation. In fact, they do not assume to be founded upon this sort of proof, but claim to be divine injunctions. To establish them in this estimation it is necessary to prove that they are rules prescribed as essential to the Church by our Lord himself or at least by his Apostles. It does not suffice to show that they reflect ancient custom, or even that they were universally observed in time past. Such a demonstration might have immense moral weight, but it would not amount to a justification of law in the strictest sense.

All of this may seem very abstract, but clearly it is not irrelevant to a discussion of the idea of the Church. It is fundamental to that discussion, and therefore it is fundamental to any discussion of Church unity. For, as a matter of fact, the greatest stumbling-block in the way of reunion is the conception that the Church is essentially a legal institution. One cannot wonder, one can hardly complain, if denominations with very various traditions resent and resist the imposition of legal precepts the necessity of which they do not perceive and the authentication of which reposes upon proofs which are doubtful and obscure. The very men who in a spirit of meekness and brotherly love would be most inclined to comply with a common and unifying custom would feel themselves by conscience compelled to reject it, if it were imposed upon them as a legal requirement involving by implication

or by remoter consequence a new definition of the Church. If, for example, a bishop or a pope is prescribed as an essential condition for the existence of the Church, a new term is added to the definition, and the primitive idea of the Church is obscured, — if the primitive idea is justly expressed by the maxim, *Ubi tres ibi ecclesia*.

This idea of law as a definition of the character of the Church is not a peculiarity of Catholicism. Historically it is the position of all the Reformed Churches. They were following the lead of Calvin, but with some exaggeration, when they regarded the right “discipline” as an essential note of the Church. The old Scottish Confession I art. 18 (I translate from the Latin) reads as follows: “Therefore we believe, confess, and proclaim the true notes of the Church of God: first and before all the preaching of the Word of God; then the right administration of the sacraments of Jesus Christ; and finally, ecclesiastical discipline rightly administered, as the Word of God prescribes, for the reprehension of vice and for the fostering of virtue. Wherever these aforesaid notes are seen and during a certain time are maintained (even if the number do not exceed two or three), there without doubt is the Church of Christ”. The “right discipline” is of course the Presbyterian polity. It was characteristic of the Reformed Church to regard Church government chiefly under the aspect of discipline. The requirement of stability (“during a certain time”) effectually excludes the recognition of a Church composed of only “two or three.” The parenthetical admission of this possibility is a pious but empty reminiscence of Calvin’s predilection for the evangelical maxim, — which is rendered nugatory by the impossibility of conceiving that a company of two or three could illustrate the right discipline, which re-

quired presbyters, ruling elders, deacons, the session, and the classical presbytery.

Though most Protestants have given up the *jure divino* claim for their institutions and no longer conceive that their societies are governed by divine law, with the sole exception of the Quakers they are all united in the opinion that law of some sort there must be in the interest of stability and order. With this they have not bettered their case, for if any law is appropriate to the Church, it is obvious that it must be a divine law, the expression of God's will. For this reason the Catholic notion of the necessity of a divine law is not so alien to the New Testament view as is the human, all-too-human conception of Protestant legislation.

But, whether it be regarded as human or divine, Church law is impotent to accomplish the end at which it aims. It aims to establish legalized order and uniformity; it has accomplished in two millenniums legalized separation and divergency. It has defeated its own aim and must defeat it, — and yet many still trust in law to reverse the process and break down the barriers which itself has created.

Unity and conformity are ideals appropriate to the Church, — in a sense they are peculiar to it, — but we err in supposing that there is no way of attaining these aims but by law. Reflection will reveal how much, in spite of all our laws, we do actually rely upon custom and the spirit of conformity to maintain the stability and good order of the Church. After all, law merely registers an agreement already reached, and it would seem as if the motive which prompted that agreement might be relied upon to maintain it. That motive is love.

The difficulty of bringing about the reunion of a

divided Christendom is very far greater than that of merely maintaining such unity and order as is already established. It constitutes a singularly unfavorable case for the application of law. The separated Churches are as independent of one another as are the sovereign nations of the world. Over and above them there is no law. There is such a thing as international law, but a code of inter-ecclesiastical law does not exist. The difficulty of federating the Churches under a common law is the same as that of federating the nations, and the difficulty of amalgamating all the Churches in one universal denomination is confessedly greater. The mere fact of separation and divergency of custom is a difficulty in the way of reunion; but this substantial difficulty is immensely increased by the fact that our differences are formulated in terms of law, and the effort to overcome them by resort to law exceedingly exasperates the situation. Great sacrifices of personal pride and prejudice are required, and they are all the greater if they are exacted in favour of another law. Law itself cannot produce the concord which we desire, and law alone cannot maintain it. The State will not intervene to compel uniformity, and there is no authority within the several denominations or above them that can effectually exact it. The great sacrifices here required must be free sacrifices, or they will not be made at all. There is but one motive that can prompt them, and that is brotherly love — or, more specifically, the meekness of love upon which St. Paul relied to maintain the order or to heal the divisions in the Churches of his founding.

Meekness is a virtue much despised because it is misunderstood. It does not denote a low opinion of one's self, nor indeed any kind of comparison of one's self with others, but the practical self-abnegation which inclines a man to

subordinate himself to others in the spirit of service, and hence to prefer their profit and preference to his own. The fact that we are taught to learn this attitude of mind from Jesus sufficiently assures us that it is not a despicable trait (Mt. 11: 28-30; Phil. 2: 1-8). Meekness may incline a man to subject himself to law — and even to a law which he accounts unwarrantable and unjust, — if such obedience is seen to conduce to a common advantage. But we must observe that this motive is measurably weakened, and the obstacles it has to overcome are at the same time notably heightened, if the unity sought after is a *legalized* conformity. The broken unity can be restored only by love. And if by love it can be attained, in spite of the greatest of obstacles, why is it impossible to believe that when all these obstacles have been done away in a Church reunited, conformity and order might be *maintained* by love alone. For love is not an occasional gift, like the tongues and prophecy which may be expected to “cease”: the peculiar excellency of love as the pledge of order and conformity in the Church lies in the fact that it “never faileth”. Where love fails the Church has ceased to exist, and all the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot put it together again.

I am contending here, not merely that law is inexpedient for the Church, but that it is inapplicable. To say that law is incompatible with the Church by reason of its very nature, is to say not merely that law *ought not* to be imposed upon the Church but that it *cannot* be. If it be true that where two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name he is in the midst of them, such an assembly is assuredly the Church, but it is not the sort of a Church which can be defined by law. By its very nature as a spiritual society it escapes the meshes of the net which

the legalist tries to spread around it. We fancy that we are legalizing the Church, but what actually we succeed in legalizing proves to be quite another sort of society — a denomination — which, though it pretends to be the Church and may in fact be nearly conterminous with it, is never identical. As a surrogate for the Church it is utterly inept.

The reason why the Church cannot be defined in terms of law lies, fundamentally, in the fact that it is a spiritual society. This distinguishes it from the State and from every other sort of secular society. We must make this affirmation of the "visible Church." To distinguish from this an "invisible Church," to which alone we ascribe religious worth, but which by definition can never suffer from visible division, and is incapable also of visible union, is to deny that there is such a thing as a problem of reunion or that there is any great evil in the happy divisions which promote a "generous rivalry" between the Churches. What remains of the visible Church when we have taken away from it all its invisible part, its spiritual reality, is really nothing more than a denomination, and we cannot be expected to feel any lively interest in its fate. The ideal of uniting all men in one universal denomination has little attraction. If *that* were all there is to the Church, it would be absurd to affirm that it cannot be governed by law: law of the most human sort is clearly applicable to it. The consequences of this distinction are tragical because the visible Church which it so profoundly disparages is the only Church which can effectually operate, which can preach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, exercise the authority of binding and loosing, or claim the loyalty of men. It would be strange if the "*Body* of

Christ" were invisible. Yet the Spirit of Christ certainly is. And, if only we do not persist in dividing what we distinguish, we may justly distinguish an invisible part in the Church. I am not thinking now of the problem which historically led to the above distinction: the recognition that there are unworthy professors of Christianity, which suggested to St. John the phrase, "Not of us," and which led St. Augustine to draw a distinction between the true and the "mixed body". I am thinking rather of the fact that Christ's presence is invisible, that the Spirit is visible only in his works, and that man himself, the most visible part of the Church, is visible only with respect to his body, whereas his chief and distinguishing part, the mind or spirit, is invisible. In order to assure ourselves that any given company of men constitutes a Church, it does not suffice that we count their bodies and hear their audible profession. We need to ascertain that these are not the bodies of dead men — men spiritually dead. It seems natural to us, if we are looking on from the outside, to seek to establish the evidence of Christ's presence (or absence) by arbitrary and formal "notes". It is natural but quite futile. Those within the circle have surer reasons for knowing both the genuineness of their own professions and the reality of Christ's presence. For such as are inclined to be sceptical. St. Paul lays down a fair and common-sense rule: "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 3). He does not teach us to scrutinize the constitution of the assembly, the form of its organization, to ascertain if Christ be there. We need only to be assured that the individual members of the assembly, or some of them ("two or three"), are spiritual men, confessing substantially the true faith (for that at least is included in the condition,

“In my Name”), — then we may know that Christ is there. The “visible Church”, if Christ the invisible Spirit be not in it, turns out to be no Church at all. That is the chief trouble about the “visible Church”: we can never be sure that it is a Church. But if Christ be there with but a few faithful disciples, the presence of unfaithful men or of the uninitiated does not essentially vitiate the Church.

The sentence of St. Ignatius, “Where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church”, expresses the primitive conception very strikingly. Most scholars agree that the word “catholic” is here used simply in the sense of universal. It was the primitive view that wherever the Church is at all it is universal. And indeed what can be more universal or ecumenical than a company of disciples met together *with Christ*? To us, however, this conception is strange, and the expression of it in the Ignatian phrase is paradoxical. For we are accustomed to think of any particular manifestation of the Church as individual, local, and partial. Consequently we apply partitive terms to the Church, we use local designations as if they implied some difference of importance, and national and denominational names we use as if they were referable to separate Churches. We speak familiarly of this or the other community of Christians as a *part* or a *branch* of the Church; we speak of the English Church, the Russian, the Greek, and the Roman; of the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Congregational, and the Lutheran Churches. These expressions come naturally to us because they correspond to our conception of the Church. It would seem to us presumptuous to speak of any particular Church as *the* Church, it would seem absurd to call it the universal Church, because we conceive of universality in terms of spacial extension. In

that sense partitive terms are applicable to the Church and must be applied. Even national and denominational names are in place, if we admit at once the reality and the difference of the several Churches which claim these titles. But if the Church be at bottom a spiritual fact, the notion of extension in space, of partitive division, of localization, is hardly less inept as applied to the Church than it would be if it were applied to the spirit of man or of God. It is as if we were to speak of a "branch" of the Holy Ghost, or of an American, an English, or a Roman Holy Ghost. Yet these locution as applied to the Church come so natural to us that it seems preposterous to challenge their appropriateness. It does not occur to us to suspect that the New Testament is as consistent in avoiding such terms as we are in preferring them, or that its use of another language indicates a notion of the Church which is widely different from ours. "*A Church*" is a phrase which does not occur in the New Testament. It knows only of "*the Church*". It applies to this Church no adjectives but "whole" and "glorious"; and, so far as I can recall, the whole primitive age has no others to add to these but "true", "holy", "catholic", "ecumenical", and "Apostolic". We, even when we are referring to the New Testament, use a language which is completely foreign to it. For example, it is natural for us to speak of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthian Church, or to the Roman; whereas, as a matter of fact, the New Testament contains no such expression. It scrupulously avoids the use of all terms which could be taken to imply that the Church anywhere existing is merely a *local* Church. It speaks, not of a Corinthian Church, nor even of a Church *of* Corinth, but of *the Church in* Corinth, — in Rome, in Philippi, in Ephesus etc. In this place or the other

the Church did actually emerge, but what came there into existence was not a local Church but the Church universal. It was a matter of comparative indifference whether it was here or there. By way of exception the Church is twice spoken of as "the Church of the Thessalonians", and likewise (once) "of the Laodiceans". Six times, when referring to a plurality of Churches in a large region, St. Paul uses the territorial name: "The Churches of Judaea" (Gal. 1: 22), "of Asia" (1 Cor. 16: 19), "of Galatia" (1 Cor. 16: 1 and Gal. 1: 2), "of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8: 1), and, more generally, "of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16: 4). "In these collective instances", says Hort (1) the simple and convenient genitive could lead to no misunderstanding. But we find no instances of such a form as "the Ecclesia of Ephesus" (a city) or "the Ecclesia of Galatia" (a region)". "No circumstance had yet arisen", adds Hort, "which could give propriety to such a form of speech". But what circumstance, we may ask, has now arisen, or can ever arise, which lends propriety to it? One circumstance alone renders it now seemingly appropriate. That is, our misunderstanding of the essential idea of the Church, the fatal twist we give to the conception when we regard every local manifestation of the Church as no more than a local Church, hence sharply distinguished from every other, capable of receiving a local and legal organization which may actually separate it from every other. That is to say, we have (even when we deny it) a congregational or parochial conception of the Church. For us the congregation is the unit, the *whole* Church is either a summation of all the units which are distributed in space, or it is a generalization.

(1) *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 114 ff.

Here — in the congregational idea of the Church — we may detect the point where our aberration begins. For the legalization of the Church naturally and necessarily begins with the congregation. The legal organization of the Church as a whole, even in the stupendous form which it has assumed under the Papacy, is not so contrary to the primitive idea of the Church as is the legal organization of the congregation. For when the local Church is thus organized, with a local membership *of its own* and *its own* local ministry, it is no longer possible to think or speak of it as *the* Church: it is simply *a* Church alongside of others, a component part of the Church, a congregation and nothing more. It is true that when every individual Church is thus organized the whole Church is in a sense organized and legalized, — yet in a way which obscures the wholeness and impedes the realization of unity.

The legal organization of the local congregation begins with an act which seems to us so perfectly natural and necessary that no one thinks of challenging its propriety. That is to say, it begins with the institution of a comprehensive and exclusive list of Church members which accords to all who are inscribed upon it the rights which belong to all members of that particular congregation and denies similar rights to all who are not yet inscribed. This is prompted by a motive quite different from the practical necessity of recognizing one another as brethren and of requiring for the purpose of such recognition in the case of strangers “letters of commendation” (2 Cor. 3: 1). The primitive notion was that every “brother” when once he was recognized as such, was to be accounted a member in any Church where he might happen to be. St. Paul, as soon as he was known to be a Christian, was recognized

as a member of the Church in Jerusalem, he was welcomed by the Church in Antioch, and, of course, by every Church of his own founding. Nor did he cease to be a member of one when he became a member of another. On one occasion when he was absent from Corinth in the body but desired to exercise authority there he pleads that he is "present in spirit" and "as present" pronounces his judgment. That is to say, being in Asia, he was still a member of the Church in Corinth, — he was a member at the same time of many Churches, of all the Churches, because he was a member of the Church universal, of which every local Church is a manifestation. I have cited the case of an Apostle because it is a case about which we have clear evidence; but what was true of St. Paul in this respect was true also, I suppose, of the simplest Church member. It was certainly true of the prophet or teacher, that if he were recognized in one place as such, he would be so recognized everywhere. It was merely a question of recognition not of enrollment in this or that local congregation. The well known man had no advantage over the simple brother except in the fact that he could more surely count upon recognition. This conception and this practice were possible because neither St. Paul, nor the prophet, nor the simple brother counted himself a member of the Corinthian Church as such, or of the Roman, or of any other.

It is not difficult to appreciate how potent must have proved this principle and practice in moulding the growing Church into a form which aptly reflected the unity of Christendom. Divergent custom, whether in discipline or in worship, was not thought tolerable in a Church so conceived, and it was not tolerated. The fundamental idea of primitive Christianity was the idea of the *Church*

(the Ecclesia); the only assembly which it recognized was the Church-assembly, the assembly of Christendom, the Congregation of God's People, the New Testament Israel. The idea of the "congregation" in our sense, as a local and partial representation of the Church, was rigorously excluded by this whole line of thought.

I cannot doubt that this original idea of the Church, if it could be generally revived among us now, would avail even for the task of resolving the divergencies which the congregational idea has fostered. And I can think of no other idea which might avail.

At the root of most of our misapprehensions about the Church is the congregational idea, the notion that the whole Church is simply the sum of all the particular congregations in the world, just as a denomination is the sum of a certain number of them. This fixed idea has effectually obscured from us the character of the primitive Church and the process of its development. It now nullifies every effort after Church unity. For under the obsession of this idea we cannot conceive of any organization of the Church which is not primarily a congregational organization, and hence a legal organization. And being now confronted with a multitude of congregations compounded into various denominations called Churches, we can hardly imagine any other way to approach reunion but by compounding several denominations into a greater, possibly all of them into *one* all-inclusive denomination. The high contracting parties to the league or union which we have in mind are the denominations, or, in the last resort, those sovereign congregations which have delegated their treaty-making powers. And in all this the Church, in the New Testament sense of the word, has no voice, has no place, simply because it is not legally organized, is neither a congregation,

nor a denomination, has no opinion of preference *of its own* to interject in the discussion, but only the word and will of God.

It is possible to find in the New Testament a specious defence of the prevailing view that the *whole* is simply a generalization from the many particular Churches. In the Greek republics there was, as a matter of course, but one *ecclesia*, the assembly of all citizens. The language of the Septuagint also knows of but one Ecclesia, the assembly of Israel with God. And there are solemn instances in the New Testament where the word Ecclesia is obviously used for the whole of Christendom (1).

Yet in the majority of instances it appears to denote local assemblies, not the whole Church. There is a Church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), another in Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1), another in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:1), etc. But above all we are impressed by the use of the plural (2).

(1) Mt. 16:28, "Upon this rock will I build my Church; 1 Cor. 13:28," "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets etc". In 1 Cor. 15:9 and Gal. 1:14 St. Paul speaks of the time when he "persecuted the Church of God." *cf.* Phil. 3:6. In 1 Cor. 10:32 the Corinthians are exhorted to "give no offence, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God". In Ephes. 1:22, 23 and Col. 1:24, 25 the Church is represented as the Body of Christ—clearly not a local congregation. And throughout the Epistle to the Ephesians the word is used absolutely and in a sense which indicates the whole people of God. There is much instruction in the expression ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, 1 Cor. 11: "When ye come together *in Church*". The word is here used clearly in the sense of assembly (when ye meet in assembly), and we see how it can be used absolutely even when only a single assembly is in question.

(2) For example in 1 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 7:17; 11:16; throughout 2 cor. except in the first verse; Rev. 2:7, etc.

It would seem as if there were many units which were combined only by a generalization, as if the local congregation were the primary and the only *real* conception, and the whole Church an abstraction.

But when we go a little further we have to note that the word Church is used not merely of the whole community of Christians in Rome, Colossae etc., but equally and without any embarrassment of still smaller groups "the Church in the house" (1); which evidently means, not a formal congregation, certainly not a conventicle erected in opposition to the greater Church of the city, but merely a customary gathering of a few of the brethren. This use of the word Church, which evidently does not agree with our prevalent notion, inasmuch as it ascribes the same religious value to a meeting of two or three in a private house as it does to the whole local congregation, points clearly to the right solution. It shows that the name Church denotes no definite empirical entity, but expresses a dogmatic value-judgment. The name *Ecclesia* (Church) is applied to every assembly, whatever be its size or form, which dogmatically—*i. e.* in view of its spiritual value as apprehended by faith—constitutes an assembly of the people of the New Covenant in the presence of God. This conception agrees with our Lord's word: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Where the Lord is, the head of the Body, there is Christendom, the whole Church. Hence St. Paul can say of the Church in Corinth (1 Cor. 12: 27), "You are the Body of Christ", and of the individuals that composed it, that they are "members each

(1) Rom. 16: 5; 1 Cor. 16: 19; Col. 4: 15; Philemon 2; *cf.* Rom. 16: 14, 15.

in his part''. When in his Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians he applies this figure to the universal Church he means by it nothing more and nothing different. What is new in the later Epistles is not the idea of one universal Church (for that meaning attached to the word Church from the earliest time and everywhere), nor the conception of the singular glory and unity of that body which has Christ for its head; new only is the Apostle's mature appreciation of Christ's headship over the creation, of which the Church is the prime mystery and revelation, his deeper reflection upon the place of Christ in the universal economy of things.

If it be true that in New Testament times and throughout the whole primitive period there was no such conception current as that of the local congregation (the parish), if it was the Church alone that existed, then we must recognize that every sort of local or parochial organization was excluded, in short, every idea of organization in terms of the civil state, of a secular society, club, or corporation. The Church could be organized only as a Church, as Christendom. Whatever order it has must be Church order, valid everywhere; and whatever organs it has must be such by reason of their relation to the Head, and hence ministers to the whole Church (1 Cor. 12: 28, 28).

This is not only the primitive but also the Catholic idea of the Church and its organization.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA OF CHURCH UNITY.

The answer to the question, What is the Church? more than half answers the question which concerns us in this chapter, namely, In what does Church unity consist? But in posing this latter query we are compelled to regard the whole matter in a very different light. We are not now concerned simply with the conditions requisite for the very existence of the Church: we are inquiring rather about the qualities which belong to its perfection. For, though the Church exists wherever Christ is present among men, it may exist in greater or less perfection. We have asked what is essential to the very being of the Church: we now ask what is necessary to its well-being. Unity, like holiness, is one of the notes of the perfection of the Church. It may be manifested in various degrees and in a number of different respects (in love, in worship, in organization, or in good works), and this with a view either to the Church at large or to the individual community. It is not enough that some degree of unity be realized, or that an abstract idea of unity be recognized. For this is one of the most practical qualities of the Church, and it is of importance that it be realized in the highest

possible degree. Our very definition of the Church implies that where it exists at all it is not lacking in some degree of unity. It has an abstract unity in the fact that it is always an identical phenomenon: it has one Head, is always the assembly of Christendom with Christ, is always the whole Body. In spite of the present divisions of Christendom a certain practical realization of unity is not impossible. It is barely possible for Christian men belonging to antagonistic denominations, Catholic and Protestant, to meet together by twos and threes with the feeling that they are brethren in Christ. But it is precisely in such circumstances that we feel the intolerable offence of the barriers which practically divide us. No one can rest content with only an abstract unity unless he has a purely abstract notion of the Church. In Ephes. 4 : 4-6 St. Paul recites a list of the fundamental conditions of unity, several of which are very practical: One Body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. But he was not satisfied with them. He appeals, in fact, to these substantial notes of unity as a motive for "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," that is, for perfecting the practical expression of brotherhood. And in this connection he points out the one disposition which makes this practical unity possible: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love". Here St. Paul has in mind especially the practical breaches of unity in the individual Church, as also in Phil. 2 : 1-8 : cf. 4 : 1. His "anxiety for all the Churches" which pressed upon him daily (2 Cor. 11 : 37) did not distract him from the humble task of maintaining and perfecting order, discipline and unity in each individual community. But his gigantic task was the maintenance of unity as between the various

Churches, particularly in view of the breach which threatened to divide Jewish and Gentile Christians. He has in view the whole Church and its growth towards perfection in every single part when he says (Ephes. 5 : 25-27) : "Even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it (having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word), that he might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Here he is certainly not thinking of the "invisible Church", for, by definition, that can have no blemish and is incapable of any growth in perfection : it can grow only in the *number* of the predestinated who are called.

There are many, on the other hand, who feel keenly the disadvantages of our present divisions and recognize that they are really a breach of Church unity, yet for faintness of heart, in view of the many and prodigious difficulties to be overcome, are fain to be content with a minimum of agreement, whether in matters of faith or of worship or of discipline. As a sufficient expression of unity they require only those things which they regard as essential to the being of the Church, putting aside as unattainable many of the things which they must account important for its perfection and for the realization of practical unity.

It may appear to such persons that in reducing as I have done the essentials of the Church to the one essential of the presence of Christ I have diminished the already meager demands that may be made in favour of unity, and that by positing the paradox that there can be no law in the Church I have rendered conformity unattainable.

But it should be considered first of all how little law and compulsion is actually capable of effecting in this

field. It has often defeated its own aim. The Act of Uniformity was responsible for English nonconformity.

In the second place, the idea of the Church which is here presented ought rather to be regarded as favorable to conformity. It furthers, so far as an idea can, the most complete conformity and the most thorough realization of unity. Though no particular Church order and no absolute uniformity in regard to any custom can be reckoned as a necessity for the existence of the Church or for unity in its most abstract conception; nevertheless practical unity is seen to be an ideal of the Church, and conformity, a duty of its members. It is evident that these are ideals peculiarly appropriate to the Church, for from the fact that every Church is in a sense identical with every other, being in every instance the *whole* Church, a manifestation of Christendom, it results that uniformity of custom is obligatory, in the very nature of the case, — in matters of importance because they are important, and in unimportant matters because they are indifferent (*adiaphora*) and can be yielded without scruple. It is intolerable that assemblies which claim to be manifestations of the same Church, emanations of the same Spirit, should be observably different, at least where the conditions of culture are alike and the opportunities of intercourse are frequent. Differences however trivial which make common worship difficult or impossible are in just that measure hindrances to communion, breaches of unity.

In the third place, though it may appear as if a view which excludes law would render vain every effort to secure conformity, it is rather true that this view disposes of the last excuse that can be made for persistence in customs which are not fit to be universal. The plea that a certain community prefers such ways, either as a matter

of personal liking or because they are sanctioned by the laws of this or that denomination, is a plea which will no longer hold when we come to recognize that the taste and likings and laws of men have no pertinence to the Church of God, in which God's will alone must prevail.

The very definition of the Church as a company of Christians assembled together with the Lord implies that the only rule which is relevant to the Church is the divine rule, that the only law which is pertinent to it is the will of God. This dictum applies not alone to dogma and to the prime factors of organization, but to every item of Church order. In the Scriptures themselves God's will is not so frequently expressed with regard to things that are to be believed as in regard to things that must be done, and these practical things which God is interested to have done are by no means all of them comprised in the sphere of morality and ethics. If the question be about the outward order of the Church, it is a divine word, a commandment of Christ, which must decide. The proper administration of the Lord's Supper is a case in point (1 Cor. 11: 23 ff.); so also is the organization of the Church through the bestowal of spiritual gifts (*charismata*, Rom. 12: 3 ff; 1 Cor. 12: 14); the appointment of Church officers (Acts 13: 2; 20: 28); and even St. Paul's precepts about formal conduct in the Church — the covering or uncovering of the head in prayer (1 Cor. 11) and the orderly conduct of meetings (1 Cor. 14) — are given as "the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14: 37). Hence St. Paul's precepts about such things as are relevant to the Church though external to religion are part of his "doctrine" touching right conduct in Christ: "My ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every Church" (1 Cor. 4: 17; cf. 11: 2). The question of

Church order is a part of Christian doctrine or "teaching".

There is, it is true, a distinction to be observed in this field. St. Paul recognizes that controversy is possible with respect to such outward customs as rest upon no direct word of the Lord. He distinguishes between his counsels and Christ's commandments (1 Cor. 7: 10, 12, 25, 40). How men ought to behave in the house of God is not so particularly prescribed by divine commandment that nothing is left unprovided for. There is a very large class of actions left over. Yet they are not altogether left open to an arbitrary or individualistic determination; for the conception of the primitive age is, that the constitution and order of the Church, as the Body of Christ, must be accounted in all its parts a divinely willed order ("for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints". (1 Cor. 14: 33), and hence that there can be but one solution of any question — the same for all Churches in the same situation — which fully corresponds with the divine will. Hence St. Paul appeals to the uniform custom of the Churches as a determining consideration in case there is no express commandment of the Lord: "We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God" (1 Cor. 11: 16): "As in all the Churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14: 33); and because he attaches so great an importance to the traditional usages he not only establishes the same rules for all the Churches of his founding (1 Cor. 4: 17; 7: 17), but he takes care that the order established in his Churches shall correspond with that observed in the rest of Christendom (1 Cor. 14: 33).

Where a question of conduct was really "indifferent" to the *Church* — though it might be of the utmost consequence to Judaism — St. Paul saw the great opportunity

for liberty, that is, a place for serviceable subjection to one another in the spirit of meekness and love.

The early Catholic age did not consciously and intentionally discard this conception of Church order; yet it effectually perverted it by ignoring the distinction we have just observed and maintaining that the *whole* Church order in all its least details was prescribed directly by Christ's commandment through his Apostles. The Apostles were thus made to play the rôle of legislators and legalizers of the Church. The Canon of the New Testament was fixed by the criterion of Apostolic authorship or authority; the baptismal creed was ascribed to the Apostles; and so also were the many treatises on Church order which had their vogue in the second and third centuries. This was the beginning of legalization. The practical deduction which was drawn from this, and one which since the end of the first century has had a profound influence upon the development of Church government, is the principle that uniformity in external order as well as in doctrine is an essential condition of the unity of the Church, and so, for the individual congregation, is an essential requisite for community with Christendom. The Christianity of the congregation — its community in the Ecclesia — was made to depend upon questions of external order and government.

But, for all that, the Catholic Church did not depart so far as did Protestantism from the primitive notion of the Church. For it never admitted the propriety of human legislation for the Ecclesia of God.

The Councils of the Church, from the "Council of Jerusalem" (Acts 15: 6) to the Vatican Council, are not to be regarded as legislative assemblies. Their function was not to make laws but to discover them, — that is to

say, to discover what is the will of God, which is the only law for the Church. They had no more legislative authority than has the judge, though like the judge they were called upon to interpret and apply the divine law. From our point of view it seems anomolous that the early Councils which we call ecumenical were not *representative* in our sense of the word. It does not agree at all with our notion of representative government that the Council of Nicaea was composed almost exclusively of Eastern bishops. The explanation is, that the idea of representative government (an idea which emerged in Europe only with the Revival of Learning) was unknown to the early Church. It is in fact totally inapplicable to the Church. For what is the use of legislative and executive machinery designed expressly to discover and formulate and effectuate man's will, if the proper aim of the Church is to discover the will of God and put it into effect? "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts 15: 28), is substantially the formula of all Councils. One will hardly take it to imply that man's vote is on a parity with God's.

Though a council was not representative of the whole Church conceived in spacial extension, yet it was in another sense (according to the primitive view) truly representative, and that not because it was a council but because it was a Church, — was in fact *the* Church and "the whole Church" (Acts 15: 22). It could not be less than the Church where men were met together with the Holy Ghost — and it could not be more. Every Church is an ecumenical Council. The decision of the Church in Jerusalem was peculiarly solemn because it seemed as if it could count, upon general *recognition*. No one could question the genuineness of that Church or the "veri-

dical" character of its inspiration; and besides it had within it men who were recognized as "pillars" (Gal. 2: 9). The little synods of the second century assumed to define the order which ought to prevail in the whole Church, and the ecumenical Councils could do no more. In every case the authority of the precept was the same, for it had the same origin, *i. e.* the Holy Ghost. The custom of convening a large number of prominent persons from distant parts of the Empire had the purely practical purpose of insuring that the Council and its canons would meet with a general recognition. That was very clearly the purpose of Constantine in convening the Council of Nicaea. The bishops were more particularly selected to attend such councils, not because as the representative delegates of the several Churches they could be expected to patronize the prejudices of each, but simply because they were the recognized, the outstanding persons both in their own communities and in the Church at large. But they were not the only persons that had a place in the Council: beside them were the Teachers, as men who were able to "handle the Word of God". None would have been there so much in place as the prophet, if prophets any longer were to be had; for ostensibly the whole purpose of the Council was to discover the will of God. The prophet was God's mouthpiece, and as such he was as apt to prescribe what ought to be done as what ought to be believed. It is a vulgar error to suppose that the prophets either of Israel or of Christendom were concerned chiefly about foretelling future events. The prophets of Israel intervened to determine both the internal order and the diplomatic relations of the State: the Christian prophets exercised themselves chiefly in determining the order of the Church. They were its lawgivers and its li-

turgists. So long as there were prophets generally *recognized* as such, synods and councils were superfluous. Under the delusion that the Christian prophets must have been occupied exclusively with the writing of books, it is sometimes asked why these monuments of theirs have perished. To one who is within the Church and desires to see the monument of these men we have only to say, *Prospice!* The divine order of the Church was the work of "the goodly fellowship of the prophets".

Zwingli enunciated the paradoxical opinion that the Pope and the whole College of Cardinals have no ecclesiastical authority because they are not a Church. This conclusion of his would be perfectly sound if his premise were true. There is no ecclesiastical authority but that which originates in the Church; for there alone Christ is to be found, with the "two or three" witnesses which the Jewish Law required as a minimum (Mt. 18: 16, 20). But Zwingli had his own peculiar legal definition of the Church as the *local Congregation*. The Pope and the College of Cardinals were not the local congregation, *ergo* they were not a Church. If they are not a Church — if they are not *the* Church — it is perfectly true that they had no ecclesiastical authority. If the Council of Nicaea was not a Church, it too had no ecclesiastical authority. *A fortiori*, neither has the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, nor the General Convention of the "Episcopal" Church, nor any other such council. Zwingli was perfectly consistent in his error: he rejected the idea of representative government (which Calvin later made to prevail) and would recognize no authority but that of the local congregation and no delegated authority within it. His error lay in his definition of the Church as a local congregation (*fons et origo* of all types of Congregational

Independency); but he was entirely right in asserting that there can be no authority in the Church but Church authority. If the session, the classical presbytery, and the general assembly — or, in another sequence, the vestry, the diocesan convention, and the general convention — are not all and each of them Churches (that is, companies of men met together with Christ to learn his will) they have no ecclesiastical authority whatsoever, they have only parochial and denominational authority.

It would be embarrassing to such assemblies to ask them if they are Churches. It is certain that they do not conceive themselves to be such. In pious and traditional phrase they commonly desire that they may be guided by the Holy Ghost; but the whole machinery of their representative system is calculated not with a view to ascertaining the will of God but with the intent of registering the will of an all-too-human constituency. In practice, what they commonly do is to legislate in favour of a party preference, or else to register a compromise between conflicting parties. The result is denominational law. And as a matter of fact no such assembly now assumes that it is legislating for the whole Church, that it is promulgating ecumenical law.

The Westminster Assembly was the last conspicuous instance in the history of Protestantism of an effort to define *jure divino* (and therefore, of course for the whole Church) the questions of ecclesiastical government and worship. To that Assembly, however, Parliament granted no legislative or executive powers. Most of the subsequent Protestant councils have been expected to legislate; but only in a human sense and not by divine right, therefore only for a denomination, not for the Church.

A system which is expressly devised to insure that the

will of the majority shall always prevail is ill adapted to insure that God's will shall prevail. The Church might as well be governed by the State. Erastianism is now generally condemned; but really it makes very little difference whether the Church gets its laws from a civil parliament or from its own legislative assembly, in case both bodies are composed of Christian men who are apt representative of the people. The Reformed doctrine of representative government being admitted, it was not unreasonable for Grotius to argue that the duly appointed magistrates of the State were the best representatives of the popular will.

One may wonder what this doleful disquisition has to do with the theme of the present chapter. It is distasteful to me, and I have hastened through it as expeditiously as I could. But it has this to do with our theme, that it exhibits the fatuity of seeking Church unity, or anything else but denominational union, by the federation or amalgamation of the existing legislative assemblies which when they were all combined in one would still have no ecclesiastical authority. More generally. I am seeking to show that we have taken hold of the thing by the wrong end. It is not order and organization that creates unity, but unity which creates order. Historically, it was the unity of the Christians of the earliest time which created a uniform and appropriate order and organization for the whole Church.

But the foregoing discussion has also a more positive and hopeful bearing upon our theme. By disparaging the legal systems under which we live, and because of which we live apart, it renders us inwardly free. Not free absolutely, for we — and especially we of the ministry — are still bound, partly by a practical compulsion and

partly for conscience sake, to obey rules which we perceive to be not Church law but merely denominational law. For conscience sake we are bound to obey precepts for which we have no veneration, lest by acting according to our own pleasure (which is not likely wiser than the will of the majority) or according to our private judgment (which is far from infallible) we make the present confusion greater. It is an opportunity for the practice of meekness and love.

The situation is difficult in precisely the proportion that the denomination to which one happens to be subjected enjoins doctrines or practices which are contrary to God's will or to the general custom of Christendom. It is, however, felt to be irksome only by the individuals who are enlightened enough to be aware of the defects of their sect. If a man find himself in a very bad case, he has the option of withdrawing from one denomination and entering another. It is conceivable that special circumstances may make it his duty rather to remain where he is. But in any event he is rendered inwardly free by the recognition that what is involved is not a change of Church but merely a change of denomination. When the matter is viewed in this light it does not seem inappropriate for a Christian man to belong to several denominations at once. Greek and Roman paganism thought it natural and meritorious for pious men to profess several religions at the same time, and under the early Empire it was common for persons of peculiar piety to seek initiation into many or all of the mystic cults. I think it is Professor Fowler who calls this "pluralizing for power". Christianity was hated because it would not admit the propriety of this gracious custom. It was intolerant from the beginning, and indubitably it would have lost its character had it not been intolerant of paganism. But the

justification of intolerance is not so clear when it becomes *ingrowing* and is directed towards different manifestations of Christianity.

I once suggested, with an irony half jocose and aiming at a *reductio ad absurdum*, that a simple way to reunite Christendom would be by encouraging every man to join all the denominations at once, — which it would not seem difficult to do inasmuch as the one rite of initiation serves for them all. What appeared at that time the most fantastic and impossible of proposals has now become practical politics. For the last Lambeth Conference (which, like the Edinburgh Conference and a few other non-legislative assemblies of Christendom, has the same character as the early councils of the Church) has solemnly proposed a plan which comes substantially to this very thing. Primarily and explicitly it contemplates only the case of the clergy, suggesting that the ministers of all denominations might seek to receive from every other such formal attestation (whether by ordination or by some other ceremony) as would assure them of universal *recognition* as able ministers of the New Covenant. But this by implication includes the *people*; for it is an ecclesiastical axiom that all who are in communion with the same person are in communion with one another. That is the reason why it is essential for the unity of the Church that there be a ministry everywhere recognized as valid. That is what insures to the bishop the authority to excommunicate from the Church, or to exercise indulgence and readmit to communion. For the bishop is *the* recognized person in the community. Every Christian can excommunicate (that is, personally refuse to communicate with another man), and every Christian is bound to exercise indulgence and forgive sin, receiving the repentant sinner into his communion.

God has given this to men not only as an authority (Mt. 9: 8) but as a duty (Mt. 6: 14). But it is another question whether it will be recognized in the Church at large that you rightly exercise the authority of binding and loosing, that you have not acted in accordance with your individual whim but as an organ of Christ. In the last resort it is your personal standing as a Christian which may be called in question. Therefore the sentence of excommunication or of absolution, though it is always a personal one (*Ego tibi pacem nego, Pacem do, Ego te absolvo, Te admitto*) requires the presence of several witnesses and the approbation of the Church (Mt. 18: 16-18). Therefore also such an act, to be effective, must proceed from a person who is recognized as a Christian *par eminentie*. In the early Church it was pre-eminently the prophets that exercised absolution or proclaimed an indulgence. Tertullian as a Montanist would suffer none but a prophet to exercise this authority, which Catholics accorded also to the bishop. Both parties, however, agreed in ascribing this authority to the martyr, for *he* certainly was an eminent Christian who in witnessing for Christ had given the surest possible proof of the genuineness of his own Christian character. In the end, the bishop, as the one person who could count upon general recognition, remained the sole effective authority (1). This agrees perfectly

(1) The earliest witness is Ignatius: *Ad Ephes.* 6: 1, When the Bishop is silent he is the more to be feared; *Ad philad.* 1: 1, 2, The bishop's silence is more effective than the speech of the heretics, for the congregation is attuned to his commandments like the harp to its strings; *Ad Smyrn.* 7: 2, The congregation has no dealings with heretics either in public or private. The "silence" of the bishop signifies that he holds not (and so implicitly forbids any intercourse with sinners: and the congregation follows his

with another point of view according to which the remission or retention of sins belongs properly to the ministry of the Word as such, for it is only with reference to God's Word and by the guidance of his Spirit that the individual Christian is competent to act in these premises, and the authority of the martyr is justified in part by the conception that "Christ is in the martyr" and "testifies" in him.

Here we have been considering a highly characteristic function of the Church which a prophet might perform, or a martyr, an individual minister of God's Word, or even (in theory) a simple member of the Body, but which a whole denomination cannot perform and rarely claims to. For no denomination, so long as it considers itself to be no more than that, assumes to exclude any one from the Church of God or to admit again to the Church one who has lapsed. The denomination conceives of itself as a denomination merely (*i. e.* as a part of the Church) and therefore assumes to exclude only from the denomination or to readmit to the denomination. A thoroughly denominational denomination conceives of its ministers as ministers only of that denomination and not of the Church of God. Hence the rules which it makes for members or

"commandments". This is Sohm's interpretation of these obscure passages, of which Lightfoot hardly knows what to make. *Cf.* Pseudo-Clement, *Ad Iacob. c. 18*, "Whom the bishop hates, him also shall the members of the congregation hate; with whom the bishop does not speak, with him shall the members of the congregation also refuse to speak; whoever remains a friend of him whom the bishop hates, or speaks to him with whom the bishop does not speak, he destroys the Church". *Cf.* my *Church and its Organization*, note on p. 236.

ministers and the character which it seeks to impress upon them are not, and are not commonly thought to be, such as are appropriate to all Christians everywhere. There are some who defend denominationalism by the plea that diversity of character is preferable to uniformity. I should sympathize with that feeling if I thought we were in danger of too much uniformity in that sense. The Methodists are a very respectable sort of Christians, but it would be appalling to imagine all men becoming Methodists. Living in Italy I find myself wondering if even the Methodists themselves desire the complete success of their mission among the "Papists", — whether they really think that Italy would be a more lovely place if the Papacy were to be abolished and all Italians were to become Protestants. For myself I should not like to see the whole world assimilated to the prevailing type of the Protestant Episcopalian. Perhaps when people say that each denomination has precious gifts to contribute to the others they may mean only that each has its faults which a life in common would modify.

I am not professing myself discontented with the denomination to which I belong, and in contemplating the sad case of others I do not mean to imply that I feel its laws as a painful restraint. They are irksome to me only in so far as they separate me from other Christians. I shall be giving offense to some, however, when I apply this name "denomination" to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. But where can one find a more denominational name than that? I have no zeal about changing this name, because there is no better alternative than a briefer denominational name, so long as the whole legal structure which constitutes it a *separate* entity is a denominational structure. It *is* a de-

nomination and often behaves as such. And yet . . . there is no other like it. Not the Roman denomination, nor the Orthodox. There is no other beside the Anglican denomination that is so commonly moved by the motive of acting upon a maxim fit at all times to be law universal in the Church of God. So that, by the constant pressure of this motive, by respect for Christian tradition and also for the prevailing custom of contemporary Christendom — perhaps also by God's *over*-ruling providence — and in spite of a legislative theory and practice which seem calculated to make man's will prevail, it has in most points so regulated its order as to leave all men within it free to feel that they are not members of a denomination merely but of the Church of God. This feeling finds frequent and emphatic expression in the Anglican Churches, and I have done nothing here in this chapter but to strive to express it in a more pointed form.

There is, of course, no Christian denomination which deliberately proposes to make laws which are contrary to God's will; and against the separatist theory of every denomination there is always struggling the feeling that it is the *Church*. As a matter of fact, they all have a great deal more in common that we usually recognize. First of all they have in common one universal rite of initiation and the more or less clear conception that this admits not to a denomination but to the Church of God. It may be said even of the most Protestant denominations that they are more Catholic than they would be inclined to admit. They profess the Catholic Creeds, and though they have discarded the Catholic ministry they retain (or until a short while ago did retain) the Catholic theory of a ministry constituted by divine law. And they have the Catholic Scriptures. It would be inept, of course, to

characterize the *contents* of the New Testament Scriptures as Catholic; but certainly the choice of these documents (the establishment of the Canon) and the estimation of them as a body of infallible writings was the deed of the early Catholic Church.

We have all this in common, . . . as well as (I hesitate to add) some sort of regard for and a more or less infrequent use of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

So far as this we are all Catholics. Strangely enough the gravest and most frequent divergencies among the so-called Evangelical denominations are with regard to principles and practices of the *primitive* age. That is due in part to the fact that the Bible did not prove so sufficient a lawbook for the Church as the Reformers expected. It has become now quite evident that the New Testament was ill framed for such a use. Notorious is the scandal told by the familiar lines:

' This is the book where each his dogma seeks,
And this the book where each his dogma finds '

But the fundamental trouble is that the Reformation, under the influence of Humanism and the Classical Revival of Learning, formed an idea too abstract, too *rational*, of the Apostolic Church and of the "mind" of that age. The immense labour and learning that during a century past have been applied to the study of the primitive period of Christianity result in a picture which shows closer affinity to the intimate *ethos* of Catholicism than to the formal scheme which the Reformers set forth as a faithful reproduction of the institutions and beliefs of the Apostolic age. It is not to be wondered at. Catholicism is not a reproduction of the early age of the Church, it is a continuation of it. With many transformations and assimilations it still preserves vestiges of the

instinctive feeling and unconscious ideation which determined the value-judgments of the early time. It is inevitable that these imponderables of immense importance, which perhaps were never brought into the clearest field of consciousness and certainly formed no part of a logical system, will slip through the meshes of an intellectualistic reconstruction and be lost. To-day there is perhaps no scholar who has the temerity to suppose that he can perfectly reconstruct the thought and feeling of the Apostolic age, even with the helps which are offered by archaeology and other collateral studies which were not available to the Reformers, who sought to perform their task by the aid of the Bible alone and were forced to complete it in haste. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular were so profoundly incapable of understanding the early ages of the Church that even the copyist who essayed to reproduce a simple fresco of the catacombs could not forbear from making it baroque. Yet his was an easy task compared with the undertaking of the Reformers, who sought not only to reconstruct intellectually the life of the Apostolic age but *practically* to reproduce it in modern times. That was impossible in the sixteenth century, and it is impossible to-day.

There was a pretty thorough-going unanimity among the Reformers in favour of the bold critical reconstruction upon which they founded the new order. Soch unanimity was imposing at the time. It has ceased to be so now when we recognize that as the production of that particular age under the influence of Humanism the picture could not have turned out very different. Critics of a more modern time have been no less confident than they and hardly less unanimous. The Reformers, however, had the advantage of being able to perpetuate the work of their

hands by enshrining it in the creeds of the Churches. Had they been less confident than they were about the adequacy of their work as it was founded upon the Bible alone, they would have felt obliged to seek corroboration or correction of it in the documents of the immediately succeeding age. But all these sources of evidence were generally ignored by the Reformers, and by the extremists among their followers they were abhorred. These people must have felt that with the beginning of the Catholic movement in the second century God's guidance had completely failed the Church ; and it must have required in them a very strong dose of delusion to suppose that God, after a millennium and a half of negligence, had assumed again into his hands the government of the Church and would henceforth infallible guide it.

Yet, I say again, in spite of all differences and divergencies with respect either to Catholic or to primitive doctrine and practice, the legislation of all our denominations contains much that is worthy to stand as representative of what the Church should do and teach, Perhaps the historical Confessions of Protestantism, in spite of the fact that they are so much preoccupied with the aim of controverting one another, have more in common than have now the denominations which they are supposed to define. For the modern Protestants are disposed to scrap their historical confessions of faith. Many of the sects have thus been brought nearer together, merged almost in the broad stream of a popular " evangelicalism " which knows no difference between Calvin and Arminius. But this current carries them so far away from their origins that they cannot now even conceive of the Catholic positions which once were close and familiar enough to make controversy pleasurable. These are the only crocodile tears

I have to shed for the old Protestant Confessions. The trouble about them is that they furnish no criterion for discriminating in the whole mass of denominational legislation what parts really correspond to the truth and to the will of God and what is to be attributed to the whim of man. From this quandary most people find escape in a new sort of "probabilism": they feel themselves justified in regarding the whole thing as human. The most divine laws are shorn of all effective authority, being neither venerated nor obeyed; and the Church fails to bear definite witness to the truth either before its own children or before the world.

The time may be near for scrapping, not the old Confessions alone, but the whole denominational machinery. This must be preceded, however, by a candid inquiry into the reasons for dissent. That is our present task. Such an inquiry, if it is to be candid, cannot always be so courteous and reticent as lately our discussions about reunion have been expected to be. This caution is prompted by the fear of disturbing good feeling. Consequently we have a great deal of good feeling but very little light. I believe that there is no reason to fear that an impartial criticism of denominational defects will now be odious as was the sectarian controversy of unblessed memory.

A searching inquiry is required, because the things which keep us apart are by no means all of them trivial and formal, like posture in prayer, the use of liturgies, and so forth. The most stubborn obstacles to union are, of course, found in articles of belief, especially in such dogmas as affect ecclesiastical practice and bestow upon it the character of divine law.

For instance, the most difficult barrier to surmount as

between "orthodox" denominations of Protestants is the insistence of all Baptist sects upon immersion and their refusal to baptize infants. There would be no difficulty about immersion, if it were only a preference instead of a dogma. Immersion is preferred by the Book of Common Prayer, though in fact it is rarely used in the Anglican Churches. The trouble is that Baptists, if they are logical, and if they attach due weight to the initiatory sacrament, are unable to regard as fellow-Christians persons who are not thus baptized, neither such as were baptized in infancy. They simply have not been baptized. No one will wish to rehearse the old arguments ("The whole house of Stephanas" etc.) which used to be urged in rebuttal of the Baptists' claim that the Scriptures furnish "no express warrant" for infant baptism. Let the Baptists boast of victory on their chosen field. But there is hope now that the question may be transferred to another plane. That is done so soon as we raise the question, whether it was reasonable in the first place to make such an appeal to the Scripture, to treat the New Testament as a legal code or commentary, or to expect that every question of this sort would be conclusively answered in a summary history by St. Luke and a few occasional letters by St. Paul. This is in fact to raise the crucial question, whether that maxim is tenable which English dissent relied upon to justify its whole position: namely, that nothing may be believed or done in the Church which is not clearly warranted by Holy Scripture (1). This maxim clearly justifies the rejection of infant baptism and of intinction, for the

(1) For the proof that I do not exaggerate in formulating this maxim so sharply or in attributing to it such fundamental importance I refer to my *Church and its Organization*, pp. 63-68.

Scriptural proofs of these practices are too dubious to justify us in risking upon them our eternal life. But it justifies just as clearly the "Fresh-water Baptists" and those others who find no express warrant in Scripture for the abolition of the Sabbath rest on the *seventh* day. It is at the bottom of innumerable sectarian divergencies, and though it was rarely stated with precision (perhaps with a suspicion that it would not bear scrutiny), it was constantly appealed to in debate. It probably owes its currency to the fact that it can be confounded with a principle which is common to all Protestants and is expressed in the Sixth Article of the "Thirty Nine" of the Church of England in the following terms: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This statement, in spite of a certain similarity of phrase, is the polar opposite of the dissenters' maxim: the latter is a confession of bondage to the letter, while the former is the paladium of liberty: the one confines belief and *action* to the compass of an ancient legal precedent, whereas the other was formulated with the intent of guaranteeing the largest possible freedom. History has shown that the common Protestant maxim would have accomplished more perfectly the intent of assuring evangelical liberty, if it had been formulated somewhat in this wise: Nothing (whether it be *within* the Scripture or without) *which is not clearly necessary to salvation* shall be required of any man as conditioning his status in the Church of God. For this article in its historical form has been commonly distorted to mean that *all* things which are contained in Holy Scripture *must* be required of every

man, that they be believed as articles of faith and be thought requisite and necessary to salvation. The tyranny which in times past the denominations exercised over their members was based largely upon that maxim.

The common Protestant principle, that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, though it may be called an "article of religion", is not properly an article of faith, inasmuch as it makes an assertion about the Scripture which the Scripture does not make about itself. It is hardly even to be regarded as a *principle*. It is, however, a statement of fact which may be accepted as highly plausible, and the rule which is founded upon it is a practical device to ensure liberty along with unity. So regarded, it might be accepted, it seems to me, even by the Catholic communions. For between the essential notes of Christianity and the "necessary erudition for every Christian man" no one fails to make a distinction; and if only the will is present to believe what the Church believes, we have a sufficient pledge of ultimate concord. It is certain at all events that complete Church unity is not possible unless it be possible to agree upon some such practical device. For if unity is offered us in exchange for Christian liberty, it is not worth the price.

There is a strong presumption in favour of the proposition that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation. It would be strange indeed if the extant documents of the first age of the Church, even if they are an incomplete and casual collection, did not somewhere, by express statement or by implication, give us clearly to understand what are the essential notes of the true Christian. And although this statement does not furnish us with any rule for discerning which predicates of the Church or of its individual members are to be regarded

as essential notes and which may be considered counsels of perfection, yet it may be expected that the Scriptures themselves will make this clear. Which indeed they do. But this, so far as the requisite of *faith* is concerned, is matter for another chapter.

I am not under the delusion that the considerations urged above account completely for such an example of dissidence as the Baptists' refusal to baptize infants. It is obvious enough that this goes back ultimately to a difference of view with regard to sacraments, which involves also the Lord's Supper and other practices which in a broad sense may be called sacramental.

It does not seem impossible now that this fundamental question might be candidly re-opened and the query considered, whether the common Protestant estimate of the sacraments really agrees with the Scripture or is not rather deduced from the too rational conception which under the influence of Humanism was formed of the Apostolic age. This question is inevitably raised so soon as we cease to value merely the letter of the Scripture and seek behind it to discover what was the "mind" of the Apostles and of the Christians of their time. For that search justifies and requires a reference to *all* the available sources of information, whether they be Jewish sources or pagan, or documents of the sub-Apostolic age. And the result of this search has been to show, from various lines of approach, that the earliest age of the Church was less sublimely rational than we like to believe, and in particular that it was not too rational to cherish a sacramental idea.

Such conclusions have hitherto had no effect upon our denominational prejudices because the critics who make these discoveries in the Holy Scripture are far too rational to submit themselves to such an authority. But

unity, I presume, is practicable only on the basis of accepting the Apostolic age as normative for the Church in all times. That is one way of justifying the authority of the Holy Scriptures. It is a way which leads us to regard all facts as important if they serve to reveal the mind or spirit in which the Scriptures were written.

The "thorough-going eschatology" of Albert Schweitzer carries back to our Lord himself an idea of sacraments which may not improperly be called *ex opere operato*, — it is, at all events, an idea of the sacraments which does not make their efficacy to depend upon intelligent faith on the part of the recipients. For if Schweitzer is right in believing (like St. John and the first artists of the catacombs) that the feeding of the multitude by the seashore was the earliest origin of the Eucharistic Sacrament, being a pledge that those who ate with Jesus here below would have a share with him in the celestial banquet in the Kingdom of God, it is evident that this was a sacrament in the most absolute sense, since the people who received it had no clear notion of its significance and Jesus himself was content to let it remain a mystery. And this agrees with the fact that according to the earliest account in the Gospels of the Lord's Supper, Jesus did not think it necessary to enlighten his disciples about the deeper significance of the "cup" till *after* they had all drunk it (Mk 14, 23, 24).

I forbear to speak at length of the proofs which converge from different points of view (from the eschatological tradition and from the mystical cults) to demonstrate that the sacramental idea was native to the Gospel and appropriate to it. It is enough to note in general that the modern interpretation of the Scripture does not encourage us to reject this idea or to rationalize it.

It seems as if we might have learned all this without the aid of modern archaeology. For it lies on the surface of the Gospel narrative that Jesus attributed to his *touch* an importance which a rationalist would prefer to ascribe solely to faith. Macaulay's gibe about "going to be touched by the bishops" might just as well have been applied to those who sought healing from Jesus. And when Jesus "blessed the little children by laying his hands upon them" he showed no disposition to deride the parents for their belief that a "touch" of his would insure them of an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. On the contrary, he openly rebuked his disciples for supposing that little children, because they were incapable of an intelligent and explicit faith, were also incapable of receiving a valid sacrament of the Kingdom.

It is vain to expect that we shall ever reach a general agreement upon this matter and upon innumerable other *practices* of the Church so long as many persist in scorning the precise evidence which is available in those documents of the second century which aim at codifying the ecclesiastical practices which, according to the opinion of that early age, were indubitably derived from the Apostles. Religious custom is conservative. Beliefs may change while the practices relevant to them remain, altering gradually. Christianity is no exception to this rule. This observation justifies the *modern* respect for tradition. It does not permit us to regard tradition as a law; but it is a genuine *respect*, and if we had not such an estimate of tradition scholars would still be engaged in the old lagomachy of denominational controversy.

Tradition may justly claim from us as Christians a profounder respect than the historical critic as such is ready to accord to it. I am convinced that in our effort

after reunion we do unwisely to aim only at a minimum of conformity, as though we could not be expected to agree except upon the "things which are necessary to salvation" or which "have clear warrant in the Holy Scripture". No one will now propose to imitate all the customs of the Apostolic age, and few will insist upon excluding all practices which are clearly more modern. Whatever be our theory, we are all of us, as a matter of fact, profoundly influenced by custom and tradition. When we are dealing with the problem of reunion we cannot afford to ignore these words of Tertullian (*De Corona, c. 3*): "If you require a law of Scripture for these and such like ordinances (the early morning Eucharist etc.), you will read nothing. Tradition is shown you as the author, custom as the confirmer, faith as the observer". By such an estimation of custom we are not enslaved to it. For the same Church Father observes (*De Virgg. vel.*): "Nothing can lord it over the truth, not tracts of time, nor the importance of persons, nor the privileges of regions. . . Our Lord Christ called himself the Truth, not custom. If Christ is ever-existent and before all things, so also is the truth an eternal and ancient thing. Whatsoever savours of opposition to the truth is heresy, even if it is an old custom".

In a measure, the ecclesiastical practice permits us to infer the ecclesiastical belief. I am suggesting here another method of approach to our problem. It may be argued, for example, that the rigorous insistence of the primitive Church upon the practice of baptism implies an estimate of the character and importance of this rite which is different from that which now prevails in Protestant Churches where the rite is little insisted upon or even neglected. And the fact (which no one will be inclined

to deny, though it might be said to "have more truth than evidence on its side") that the early Church did on every Lord's Day at least celebrate the Lord's Supper and that every Christian did then partake of it does certainly suggest a different estimate of the character, if not of the importance, of the Sacrament than is now implied by the Protestant practice or by the Catholic.

Here I am not intent upon prescribing what we must all think about the sacraments of the Church, or even what we must *do* about them. Agreement about the *doing* or practice is likely, I suppose, to come first. Here, however, our aim is simply to suggest the lines of a candid inquiry. But perhaps this line of thought will also suggest that when the time comes for scrapping our denominations there may be a new body already formed beneath the husk of the old chrysalis.

The suggestion that the old denominations might be dispensed with, — or, more generally, the denial of the relevancy of law to the Church, — leaves people aghast. What would we have left? they exclaim.

What we have left is simply the Church of God, with all its "members in particular", to which God gives a bodily organization as pleases him. And though he leaves it without positive law for its guidance (in the sense only that the human body is without law), he does not fail to bestow upon it his Holy Spirit, and by the gifts and operations of the Spirit the Church is assured of an order and organization appropriate to the Body of Christ. Order and organization — and a uniform order and organization at that — are aims appropriate to the Church. For among its members there is no atomistic equality, as of like units which have the same duties and the same rights. On the contrary, the Body of Christ, like the human

body, has many members, and all the members have not the same office (Rom. 12 : 3-8). In the Church, inferiority and superiority are divinely intended, being indicated by the endowments which God bestows upon each member for service in the Body of Christ. The gift (*charisma*) which each individual possesses claims recognition on the part of the brethren, and in so far as it constitutes a call to a guiding or administrative activity in the Church it claims obedience (1 Cor. 16: 15, 16).

Primarily, the organization of the Church was expressed by a charismatic ministry: "First Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12: 18) "Then", but equally from God, came other sorts of gifts which did not all of them imply a corresponding office: "miracles, gifts of healings, wise counsels, kinds of tongues". So long as the ministry was of this character the Church could not be conceived of as a legal organization. The recognition and obedience which the charisma claims as its due is not such as is exacted by formal legislation: it is a free obedience such as is prompted by love, and it is rendered not to man but to God who gives the gift. It is in this connection therefore that St. Paul (1 Cor. 13) exalts the importance of love. He has in mind particularly the love which is manifested in Church life, which prompts the individual to exercise his own gift in the service of the Church and also to recognize the special gifts of others, "that there should be no schism in the body". The history of "enthusiasm" warns us of the danger of an over-estimation of spiritual gifts divorced from the control of the rational intelligence. St. Paul had a troublesome experience of this sort of thing at Corinth. But the fear that God's Church under God's government might go to wrack ought to be allayed by

St. Paul's dictum that "God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints".

A further reason why the organization and government of the Church cannot be defined in legal terms lies in the fact that there is no specific gift of government, no office of governor, rector, or any such like title, but the gift of teaching is at the same time the gift of regiment, the teaching office being not only the highest in the Church but the sole office which implies authority. This for the reason that the Church must be governed according to God's will and that the teacher is the person expected to make this will known, not only in general terms but in all its particular applications. If we admit that the truth cannot be established by human laws, we must admit that the government of the Church cannot be.

One of the singularities of Calvin's position which affects all of the Reformed Churches even today was his denial that the teaching office (the ministry of the Word) had any authority in the matter of government or discipline. The pastor was to proclaim in general terms the will of God, but he was not permitted to apply it to particular cases. He might announce on what conditions God will forgive sinners (as the minister does in the Anglican "Absolution" at Morning Prayer), but he himself could not admit to the Church, absolve, or excommunicate. The whole discipline and government of the Church, belonged to the lay elders as the representatives of the people.

In a sense Calvin was right: the ministry of the Word has properly no part in the *legal* administration of the Church. But what then of the Apostles and prophets of the primitive age? Were they not ministers of the word? and was it not *as such* that they felt empowered to

intervene in every question of government or discipline? The case of the prophet is the clearest, for he had no claim to authority except his exalted gift of teaching, yet there was no practical concern of the Church that lay outside of his authority. The most eminently priestly function known to the Church was that of "ministering as a priest the Gospel of God" (Rom. 15: 16), and hence the teaching function implied an authority in all religious matters. The *Didache* at the beginning of the second century says of the prophets, "They are your high-priests". Not much later the title of priest was applied to the bishops. They "take the place of the prophets and teachers" (as the *Didache* puts it), and therefore must be accounted ministers of the Word though they have no extraordinary gifts. It was on this ground that the bishop was recognized as the leader in worship as well as in government and discipline, for the gift of prayer was a part of the gift of teaching. Thus even the Catholic development began with a conception which is not favourable to law: and even now the Catholic Churches have not so far lost trace of this beginning that they will tolerate any law but divine law.

The considerations which occupy this chapter are of a general character, touching from various points of view the very idea of Church unity. They must be kept in mind when we consider in later chapters the practical details in which conformity must be sought.

CHAPTER IV.

UNITY THROUGH PRAYER

Church unity involves four principal factors : union in polity, in creed, in charity, and in prayer. There seems to be a general agreement that the fourth factor here enumerated comes properly in the last place, if it is not considered irrelevant altogether to Church unity. It is left out of account in most of the schemes which are now being devised for Christian union or even for Church unity. Generally people seem more inclined to pray for unity than to seek unity in prayer. But while I was writing this chapter there came into my hands two very precious books which prove that what I am here setting forth as a theory is being widely tried in practice. One of these books is *The Fellowship of Silence*, edited by Cyril Hefner (Macmillan, 1916): the other is *Fellowship in Thought and Prayer* by Basil Mathews and Harry Bisseker (Hodder & Stoughton). But doubtless there are some, even among those who regard prayer as the chief means of grace, who do not consider it important that all Christians should be able to unite in common worship, while others, perhaps, postpone consideration of the subject because they are incredulous that Christians can be united

on this basis. The differences, they think, are too great, and the controversy on this subject has been too bitter. The bitter word which Luther uttered in breaking off a conference with the Calvinists referred more particularly to discord about the sacraments, but it had in view more generally a difference in the spirit of worship. "Ye have a different spirit from us", said Luther. Nowhere has this terrible saying been more clearly illustrated than in the ritual controversies waged among English-speaking Protestants, whether as between Churchmen and dissenters or the like, as to the legitimacy of any ritual whatsoever, or as between high and low Churchmen, discussing the propriety of more ritual or less.

But if it be really impossible for Christians to unite in common worship, they can never be really united. It is vain to talk of Christian union, if Christians cannot commonly pray together; and such an expression as Church unity is plainly absurd when applied to a state of affairs which is expected to unite men formally under one government while it leaves them as far separated as ever in the central act of religion. The Catholic rule is precise: Men who are not in communion cannot pray together; and, conversely, men who cannot pray together are not in communion. If we consider prayer merely as the act of making our desires known to the Supreme Being, we must acknowledge that all men can pray *together* if they can pray at all. But if prayer is communion with God through Christ, and if this is the very act which constitutes the Church, none who are not Christians can join in our prayer, and that any Christians should be separated from us in this act implies a most dolorous separation.

The notion that we need only to be formally united —

under one government but not in prayer — is a counsel of despair. It must seem so at least to all who entertain a broader hope than merely the union of the characteristic Protestant denominations which have already similar fashions of worship. The fact that there are so many of these denominations and that union among them would of itself be so beneficent an event explains, perhaps, why, from *their* standpoint, the problem of common worship comes last or not at all into account. This simplification of the problem, however, can only be arrived at by ignoring the so-called liturgical Churches, which, though they are not so *many*, constitute by far the *larger* part of Christendom. For it is not as though we had to do with societies which legally impose upon their constituents a particular form of worship and could by a new law abolish or alter it. The fact that a particular form of worship is established by law, secular or ecclesiastical, is of little importance. The important fact is that a community of Christian people is accustomed to that way of worship and will not readily be content with another. We have to reckon with the fact that Protestants generally (though with many exceptions) do not like to join in the common worship of the Anglican Churches. Perhaps this is merely because these ways are strange to them and make them ill at ease. It is a still more obvious fact, however, that Anglicans do not like to join in the worship of the non-liturgical Churches. To this there is hardly any exception; and this fact is not sufficiently accounted for by saying that the ways are strange to them. It is not something new that makes them ill at ease, but the lack of something they are accustomed to. It may be said in retort to this that Christians of various denominations which represent divergent customs with regard to prayer

do often meet together for public worship, with the intent of manifesting their fellowship. But it needs to be inquired how far they are able to overcome the subjective obstacles to common prayer under such conditions, to what extent they actually succeed in praying, and whether they are not commonly compelled to be content with a formal exhibition of good will. It is my opinion that they rarely succeed except when they unite in the universal ritual of silent prayer. For if it be not true that we have "another spirit", it is certain that we now speak different languages in prayer. The Tower of Babel is a long way from the New Jerusalem. The motive is obvious which leads the Roman Church to insist upon the use everywhere of a common tongue for common worship. It is only unfortunate that it has to employ a dead language (no man's speech) as the speech of prayer for every man. But the differences I have here in mind go deeper than the tongue and spoken speech. They are most keenly felt when the spoken language is the same; and for all practical purposes of unity it would suffice if all who live together and use a common idiom might be able to pray together. An example of these differences deeper than words I find in the Roman Church itself. I could worship in this Church according to the ancient formulas of prayer which are still nominally the basis of common worship, for I know the language and share the spirit of these prayers. But I feel that the new devotions of the Roman Church, whether they be expressed in Latin or in the vernacular, are of a different spirit — substantially they are another language, — and I am aware that in following the canon of the Mass, while I may be praying with the priest, I am not praying with the people. It is some such difference as this which divides Protestants who pray

in the common English idiom — or which divides Anglicans at least from other Protestants — and makes common prayer impossible.

It will be seen that I am not disposed to disguise or minimize the difficulties that stand in the way of every effort to unite separated Christians in common worship. Nevertheless I insist upon the importance of this for a united Christendom. I would call it the prime necessity. It is not enough that it should be kept in view as a consummation much to be desired: it must be directly aimed at and, I would say, aimed at first of all, with the expectation of attaining through the unity experienced in prayer all other expressions of unity. We must pray *for* unity, as a matter of course. It is perhaps the only effective means for bringing it about. If all were brought to the point of praying for unity, no doubt it would soon be accomplished. But in itself prayer for unity is not accomplishment, it is a means to an end; whereas unity in prayer would be the consummation of unity.

As a practical programme it will seem to many absurd to seek first of all the very crown and consummation of unity. It would be so if there were no reason to believe that it might be attained more easily than the less essential expressions of unity which we have been vainly striving to realize. All will agree that unity in common prayer is to be aimed at along with a common creed and a common polity, and some will admit that it ought to be first in desire. My thesis is that it ought to be sought first in execution.

It is clear enough that a unity which is expressed only in agreement about faith and order (if "order" include no more than orders and government) remains an incomplete unity. It is a truncated pyramid, and as such

it has only the unity of cohesion, like any other lump. It lacks the apex which confers upon it formal, ideal, essential oneness. Prayer, aspiring to God, is the apex of Christian unity, being the one point at which we are really united in the experience of being together with God. Under prayer we must include the Sacrament of Communion. But it is plain that even if the obstacle of order and orders were done away, we should find it impossible to communicate commonly in that sacrament so long as it remains impossible for us to pray together. It is not enough to say that in common prayer we are brought together with one another and with God. We are more than united: being brought together *in* God, we are *one* in God. It is not simply that we as men meet together. As men we have with one another only the base cohesion of the lump, a necessary, natural, and humiliating unity. Shakespeare expresses this in words which sentimentality has strangely claimed for its own: "A touch" of nature — really it is a *tache* or stain as of original sin — "makes the whole world kin". "Human, — all-too-human", is Nietzsche's way of saying the same thing; and, "We are all tarred with the same stick", is a popular proverb. We are thus united at the base of the pyramid, whether we will or no. The only noble sense in which we can be all united is in God, through prayer. That means, for all mankind (if all mankind are to be united), in Christ. For Christ first conceived of such a union, so universal, and set himself forth as the Uniter. That at least is a unique distinction of Jesus. Henceforth, whosoever else may cherish this ideal and proclaim it remains subordinate to him, in a sense his follower, for *He* first did it. This high unity of mankind at the apex of the pyramid is neither natural nor necessary: it is not forced upon us

against our will, but is only to be attained by willing. Yet in the end it is established as a definite certainty, according to a higher necessity, because it is "not by the will of man, nor by the will of the flesh, but by the will of God". When in response to this will we "come together unto one place", this is not to be *together* simply, for we are only too much and too inevitably together on the lower plane of natural cohesion: it is rather that we may be together in God. The word "Meeting" is so solemn a term in the Old Testament because it does not mean a meeting together of the people but their meeting in God's presence, their meeting with him. Hence the "Tent of Meeting" was not a spacious covering for the people but merely a protection for the Ark of Jehovah, and it was a matter of secondary importance how many persons might meet God there, — whether it was Moses alone or the whole people. The Meeting (Ecclesia) is complete if there be but "two or three".

We have no record that Jesus ever gave his disciples commandment to meet together. He did, however, attach such a promise to their meeting as he never made to those who would seek God only in solitary prayer. In all times (with sporadic exceptions — *cf.* Heb. 10: 25 and later the hermits) the disciples of Christ have felt an instinctive need for meeting together, and where such a meeting proves to be a meeting with God they experience in it an enhanced sense of spiritual power. What Christians properly seek in their meeting is ultimately neither the satisfaction of an egoistic pietism, nor the feeling of social solidarity; rather it is light upon the problems of faith and duty with agreement upon these matters. For this reason the Meeting is not exclusively occupied with prayer. From the earliest time "teaching" and "prophecy" were

conspicuous elements in the Meeting. In laying stress here upon the element of prayer (man's address to God) I have no intention of ignoring God's answer to prayer in teaching and prophecy or his response in silence to the individual soul. I would only emphasize the fact that it is only through corporate prayer that we can expect corporate counsel. Hence any meeting that is convened to discuss faith and duty (whether it be a vestry meeting or in ecumenical council) must be a prayer meeting, — that is to say, a Church.

In the earliest times every meeting of the Church, for whatever purpose convened, was of this nature. In the more specific sense of the word the Church was simply the Meeting; but in a broader sense it referred to the persons who were thus accustomed to meet, the People of God. By meeting together in the spirit of prayer Christians do not merely show and affirm their solidarity, they actually *realize* it in this experience. Without the Meeting they would not be "one body".

In the age which the New Testament Scriptures report the experience of Christian solidarity was denominated by a precise and technical term, "fellowship" (κοινωνία). It is much to be regretted that this word is not consistently translated by the same term in our English versions. So various are the applications of this word in the New Testament that we cannot now render them all by any one word in our idiom. But when our language was in the making we might have made it to fit. *Fellowship* might have been used for all the uses of the substantive. If we were to employ this word for the loftiest experience ("fellowship in the Holy Spirit", "fellowship in the Body and Blood of Christ" *etc.*) we should more readily perceive that every practical expression of love to

the brethren is so related to this central experience as to deserve the name of "a fellowship", and should understand why even almsgiving was called "a fellowship" and *not* a "contribution" or "distribution", as we have unfeelingly translated this Scriptural word. For the verbal form of this word, which literally means to exhibit fellowship, we are now compelled to use the word *communicate*, whether we have in mind the experience of fellowship with Christ or the practical realization of fellowship with the brethren. Let us at least use that word consistently. In the Holy Communion we communicate in the Lord's Body. This word expresses the social significance of the Sacrament, which we *share* with our brethren. By the same token we are bound to communicate with them in worldly goods. If we say, as is now the vulgar Protestant parlance, that we "commune" in the Sacrament, we denote an experience of solitary communion with God which ignores the social aspect of the Sacrament and cuts the tie which unites this central religious experience with the ethical precept of practical brotherly love. Almost all that I am attempting to say in this chapter is said by this one word. Fellowship or communion is established by the act of meeting with God. It is not exclusively communion with God or fellowship with men, but both of these things in one. And as fellowship with men (with Christians in particular) it implies not merely good feeling but active benevolence.

To have "all things in *common*" was the Christian ideal at its highest (Acts 2: 44), but every practical expression of Christian love was called a "fellowship", whether it was the alms which St. Paul took to Jerusalem or the aid which he personally received from the Churches. The efforts which are now being made to realize the

Christian ideal of equality (2 Cor. 8: 14, 15), though under new conditions and by new methods, deserve as fully to be called by this name. Fellowship — mystical and practical — is only another name for the Church. There can be no Christian fellowship apart from the Church, and there can be no Church deserving of the name without fellowship. Of the two names the word fellowship is the broader; for whereas the word Church is associated especially with the moment of meeting, the word fellowship suggests the continuation of that experience and its practical realization. The thought of the *whole* empirical fellowship was vivid in early Christianity, and the primitive conception that the Church was ideally whole in every assembly of Christians did not obscure the thought of a larger unity or tend to make men content with a conventicle.

Ubi tres ibi ecclesia. "Wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the *universal* Church". It sounds paradoxical to us to hear the Church spoken of as universal or whole when the notion is not stretched so far as to include all genuine Christians throughout the world and may even cover only the two or three that meet together with God. That is because *we* attach more importance to the congregation than to the Meeting, are more impressed by the observable multitude of believers than by their meeting with God which "cometh not with observation". This notion of the Church as whole and complete in every realization of itself may be a comfort in the face of a divided Christendom, but it has not the tendency to make us smugly content with the smallest possible exhibition of fellowship, at the next remove from individualism. Rather it prompts us to seek after the broadest conceivable expression of fellowship, after the most concrete realization of unity,

and even after uniformity. The breadth of fellowship actually realized in every Church is magnificently conceived by Origen (*De Oratione* c. 31). I quote the passage freely: "In every assembly of believers is present the power of our Lord and Saviour, also the holy spirits (*i. e.* angels), and the spirits of those that have fallen asleep before us, and, as it were, the faithful who are still in this life, though the *how* of it is not easy to say". A Latin document (*De Aleatoribus*) of the end of the second century puts the same thought more briefly: "Cast thy money upon the altar as seeing Christ seated there, the angels being spectators and the martyrs present". This is of a piece with the conception that "the earthly Church is an image of the heavenly" which goes back to the Apocalypse of St. John. The exile upon Patmos, deprived of the customary fellowship of worship "on the Lord's Day", was comforted by a vision of the heavenly assembly of worship, in which he himself participated, but which he can describe only by exalting the terms of common worship which were dear and familiar to him on earth. It was very natural therefore that in the Apocalypse the Church discovered the counterpart of its earthly worship and believed that the two interpenetrated. The liturgies furnish abundant proof of this conception. It is for this reason that, in an age when apocalyptic eschatology was discountenanced by the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical (by Constantine and his bishops) the pictures chosen to decorate the apsidal end of the basilicas (the *royal* meeting house, the *domus ecclesiae*) were all taken from the Apocalypse of St. John. Obviously they were not chosen because they were taken to be eschatological prophecy, but because they made visible to the eye what faith beheld as a present reality. From this point of view

St. Ignatius is to be understood when he compares the bishop with Christ (or with the Father) and the presbyters with the Apostles. For he had evidently in mind the celestial analogy which later was depicted in the apse. As Christ was enthroned in the New Jerusalem with the Twelve Apostles seated on either side of him, so was the bishop seated below at the Holy Table.

If this is not "High Church" doctrine, it is at all events very high Church-doctrine. It involves an immense extension of our notion of catholicity or wholeness. It requires us to conceive of the Church not in two dimensions of space only but in three: in length and breadth and height. Yet essentially all spacial conceptions (appropriate to material things) are inept as applied to the Church. For the Church is a spiritual fact. It is whole in the sense that the mind is whole and remains whole wherever it manifests itself. In the same way the Church is whole wherever it is at all, even though the company consist of but two or three together with Christ. And this is not a vain abstraction, for Christ *is* there. Nor is it an excuse for smug contentment or quietistic indolence, for like every incarnate mind the Church feels a craving to incorporate with itself and mould to the form of its unity all the material elements it can assimilate. This conception of the Church is itself a motive to make the empirical fellowship (the congregation) as complete as possible. The Church, however small it may be, is never a conventicle. No Christian motive but only pride moves men (whether by twos and threes or in larger bodies) to separate themselves in worship from the greater number of the faithful who might come together unto one place. Such men will not even wish to feel that the whole multitude of believers in all the world is in some mysterious

way present with them. It is true nevertheless that the conception I have been urging would legitimate even a separated company of two or three *if* Christ is manifestly in the midst of them. The realization that Christ is in the Church is of such immense importance that even the grandiose thought of the presence of the angels and the spirits of the blessed dead pales before it into insignificance. This conception which seems so novel to us is not new. It is the conception of the earliest Church which we draw from the New Testament Scriptures. For the idea which prevailed in the first century and in the second, which determined ecclesiastical thought and practice not only in the primitive but also in the early Catholic period, was not the idea of the congregation but of the Ecclesia.

How this conception might inspire a zeal for unity we see in the earnest exhortations of St. Ignatius, which he uttered in the same breath with the maxim I have been dwelling upon — and not essentially in contradiction to it, as it seems to me. For when Ignatius says (*Ad Smyr.* 8: 2), “It is not lawful apart from the Bishop either to baptize or to hold an *agape*”, when he exhorts the people to be in concord with the bishop and the presbyters and the deacons, warning them that “apart from the bishop there is not even the name of a Church” (*Ad Trall.* 3), or when he insists again and again upon communion in the one Eucharist, he is only saying what then had to be said if the Church was to be saved from heresies which were in a position to snatch stray sheep one by one (or by twos and threes) but unable to attack the fold protected by the shepherds. And in saying this he did not radically contravene the evangelical maxim. For indeed it is always a question whether every group

of two or three (or it may be of many) that is ostensibly gathered together in Christ's name is really met in his presence. There is a presumption that such as wilfully separate themselves from their brethren are also separating themselves from Christ. Not every coming "together unto one place" (1 Cor. 11: 29) is a coming "together in the Church" (1 Cor. 11: 18). For we need ever to remember that the Church is not the meeting house, nor a meeting *simpliciter*, but the Meeting with God. The bishop with all the presbyters and deacons do not constitute a Church if Christ is far away; and if Christ indeed be present the bishop's absence takes away nothing essential from the Church. St. Ignatius, I take it, valued the bishop (and the whole ministry as he found it constituted) chiefly as a guarantee of the orthodoxy (Christianity) of any meeting, and hence as a pledge of the presence of Christ, — proving invisible things by visible. From another point of view, he valued the bishop and the constituted ministry as a practical bond of union between individual Christians and between the several Churches. It was not only in the act of worship, as the leader or exponent of the people in prayer, that the bishop was to be "respected as being a type of the Father"; but everywhere, as one who potentially performed this function, he was to be held in high honour. For the Church did not exist solely in the moment of meeting with God, — though in that act it was constituted and in this relation it was commonly conceived. A multitude of individual believers who never met together in prayer and worship could not be regarded as a Church. But given the practice of meeting and the potentiality of meeting again, the individual components did not in the mean time fall into atomic isolation, but were thought

of still in terms of the meeting, as “one Body”, were in fact still united to Christ, and the pyramid of prayer was perpetuated also in visible form by the relation of all to the ministry. The ministry was an emanation of the Meeting, its whole character and all its functions being determined by the place it held and the offices it performed in common worship; and when the Meeting was for the time being dissolved the *form* of it still remained in the constitution of the ministry. In a sense it may be said that the ministry, and more especially the bishop, was the apex of the pyramid; for the fact that a person represented the people in prayer to God, and also interpreted the will of God to the people, constituted the only title to authority in the Church from the moment that the Meeting was dissolved. This apex then remained, not as a medium of communication with God, but as the symbol of union as among the individual members of the Church.

The subject of this long digression is more closely connected with a later chapter which considers the problem of a common ministry. But such a digression in this place does not leave us with our hands empty of gain if it confers upon us the perception that common worship is not merely an occasional function of the Church but its constitutive function, that in the stricter sense the Church exists only in the act of common worship, — in short, that the apex of the pyramid *is* the pyramid. So far as the figurative analogy is concerned, it is literally true that a pyramid which has lost its apex is no longer a pyramid, however vast may be its dimensions; whereas the apex, however small a section it may be, remains always a pyramid, is in a sense always whole. I have tried to show that the analogy with the Church is even

to this degree positive and precise. Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name and Christ is verily in the midst of them, *this* is the whole Church. Whereas the pyramid of the Church which has lost its uniting point in prayer is no longer a Church at all. The truncated base of the pyramid, massive as it may be, has lost its ideal unity and is held together, if at all, only by a natural cohesion, by human preferences (the will of man), by a social contract, and by laws which, though they may be called ecclesiastical canons, are in reality as human as the civil code. The multitude of Christians who cohere only by material attraction at the base of the pyramid and neither do nor can meet together in prayer do not collectively deserve the name of an Ecclesia. We might say of them rather that they are "Ephesians, my Lord, of the old church" (*i. e.* a riotous multitude) (1). In the Bible which Shakespeare read, the word "church" occurred in Acts 19: 32, 41 as a rendering for ἐκκλησία, which is strangely used in this passage to denote, not the Christian assembly, nor the assembly of citizens duly called by the herald, but the riotous assembly at Ephesus which threatened St. Paul. (I am fain to register here this impertinent observation for fear it should perish with me, for it has escaped the acumen of professional commentators upon Shakespeare).

What has been said above makes it plain that the pyramid of the Church ideally begins at the top, with the act of common worship. But *practically*, one will say, it must be built up from the botton, beginning with creed and polity. I might retort that, in *rebuilding*, it might suffice to renew the apex. But it is a more complete and

(1) Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part II Act ii. Sc. 2.*

convincing rejoinder to point out that Jesus did in fact build this pyramid from the top down. To avoid the suspicion that I am mixing the metaphor, I remark that by the "top" I do not mean the few, nor by the "bottom" the many (though that too would be an instructive analogy); but by the "top" I mean the simple uniting fact of meeting in the presence of God, and the base of the pyramid consists of all the remoter implications of this fact in the development of polity, theology, institutions of charity, and worship, — which are the four describing lines of the pyramid, long drawn out in proportion as the base recedes and its area is enlarged. It is certain that Jesus imparted to his disciples no Church polity and hardly more theology than the conviction of the presence of God as Father. He taught them to be merciful, yet with a simplicity which hardly suggested an institutional development. He taught them, however, to pray, and he even gave them a formula of common prayer. It is true — and it is too striking a fact to be ignored — that except for the "we" and the "our" of this formula there is no hint that the disciples of Jesus united in common prayer, — except of course in the synagogue, in a communion that was Jewish, not Christian. We have to suppose that this formula, so evidently expressed in terms of common worship, was at first used only in "the closet", and that the disciples did not then feel peculiarly united together by prayer to God as Father. They were, however, united by the fact that Jesus was in the midst of them, — though the Gospels make it plain that this union was then far less perfect than that which they experienced when Jesus was no longer with them as "in the days of his flesh", but within them as Spirit. It comports with this that until Pentecost the disciples did

not regard themselves as the Church but as the school of Jesus. But there were anticipations and adumbrations. The one prayer that we can confidently infer they united in was the thanksgiving (eucharist) at the daily meal, culminating with the Eucharist of the Last Supper, when also they sang a hymn. For this supper was not only a sacramental pledge that the disciples should have a share in the heavenly banquet in the Kingdom of God; it was also a mysterious anticipation of the Church. But every common meal "sanctified by thanksgiving" was an anticipation of the Church in the fact that it expressed and realized the most intimate fellowship with Jesus. The Church was first solemnly and mysteriously foreshadowed in the multitude by the sea-shore. There Jesus gave thanks over the loaves and fishes, which he distributed as a sacrament to the people who had followed him in Galilee and who saw him then for the last time. The significance of this act no one understood but Jesus, for he alone knew that he was going away and he alone comprehended that the Church was constituted and the Kingdom inherited by fellowship with him.

The Church was fully constituted — small in numbers, but catholic, whole, universal, ecumenical — so soon as Jesus returned as Spirit. Of that time it is written: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2: 42). This "teaching" of the Apostles was not doctrine in the technical sense, certainly not theology as a science. It was doubtless concerned chiefly with what men are to *do* to be saved, rather than with what they are to believe. Yet one doctrine it contained which was a condition precedent to Christian union in prayer: the doctrine, namely, that Jesus is the Christ. Throughout the whole

Apostolic period it was hardly found necessary to expand this dogma further than is done in the formula, "Jesus Christ is Lord". That expressed clearly the significance of prayer *in His Name*. It may be affirmed that every subsequent expansion of the doctrine concerning Christ and concerning the relation of Christ to the Godhead was pressed upon the Church by the practical interest of maintaining communion with God the Father *through* Christ. Is it too much to say that this interest centered in the act of common worship which realized the presence of Christ in the midst of his disciples and constituted the congregation a Church? Whatever view of Christ, of God, or of the world tends to render this experience impossible must be repudiated by the Church with the greatest vigour. It is a matter of life and death.

I am not seeking to reduce the whole interest of Christendom to the one interest of common prayer or to resolve the various essentials of the Church into one essential. Faith, hope and love were along with prayer at the apex of the pyramid "from the beginning". But at the beginning they hardly indicated to the eye the four lines which were to describe the pyramid in its secular extension. At the apex they were hardly differentiated. Prayer plainly was there, with the "breaking of bread" which was its sublimest moment. About the teaching we have said enough for the present. Love corresponds to practical fellowship (*miser cordia*), which at the beginning was carried to such a point that "they had all things in common". Polity is barely adumbrated in the fact that there survived the Lord eleven Apostles whom he had chosen to be with him. Each of these lines became more distinct as it was drawn out in time and receded further from every other; so that one may wonder in the

end what Church polity has to do with love, what prayer with polity, what love with creed, — and so with any of the possible combinations. But if we were able to follow these lines back to the point from which they diverge, I do not know what we could find there but the pure act — I do not say, of prayer in the most specific sense, but — of meeting with God. I have elsewhere developed and defended at length the theory that the form of Church government was determined by the functions performed in common worship and particularly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the same work I have tried to show that the primary institutions of charity were as closely related to this sacrament. But it is still more important to observe that, not the institutions of charity only, but charity itself, the sentiment of *misericordia*, springs directly from God's response to us in prayer. Jesus himself said, speaking of spiritual gifts, "Freely ye have received, freely give".

The foregoing observations converge from different points of view to prove that unity in common worship is an essential note of the Church, that it is the act which primarily constitutes the Church, and that therefore it is the principal and prime consideration in maintaining union or in effecting reunion.

If any one persist in affirming that practically, under present conditions, there are easier and more hopeful ways of approach — for example, by haggling over Church polity, or by agreeing to accept a minimum of doctrine — I might retort that these ways have not yet brought us very far. The trouble is, they do not tap any new source of power. On the contrary, the initial enthusiasm inspired by the ideal is likely to be withered by the arid details of controversy.

Father Tyrrel has pointed out the superiority of the *lex orandi* to the *lex credendi*. It is more persuasive because essentially it is not law, does not seek to compel, and so does not awaken instinctive opposition. Its superiority is accounted for in part by the fact that in the beginning faith expressed itself pre-minently in prayer. It was to guard the integrity of prayer, *i. e.* of communion with God in Christ, that faith gradually externalized itself in intellectual propositions. A Christian can best learn the meaning of his creed by resolving it again into prayer and out of the act of prayer deducing the necessary implications. Beliefs which are not necessary to Christian prayer can be no necessary part of Christian doctrine.

But, it is said, there are certain conventional barriers to be broken down before we can pray together. The case of the Romanist is the hardest: he cannot pray with us, whether we be Orthodox, Anglican or Protestant. True, but we can pray with him, — and as for the impediments between Protestants, have we seriously tried to overcome them. Would not the considerations which are here presented, if they were generally urged and apprehended, do much to bring us together in common worship? The motives, it seems to me are strong enough: the ways and means I shall consider more especially in the following chapter.

As a matter of fact, many traditional prejudices about prayer are weakening. I cannot draw much comfort from that fact when earnestness about common prayer is manifestly weakening too. I reflect, however, that if only we knew our plight there would be far fewer obstacles to reunion discoverable. We talk too much about the precious contributions each sect has to offer the other. In reality, so far as vital religion is concerned, what have

any of our sects to boast of? And as for prayer — the most part do not know when they are *not* praying. The formal invitation, “Let us pray”, is an ineptitude when men have not yet been taught *how* to pray. It leads them to believe that prayer is an easy thing which they can promptly do at command. They need to be taught that prayer is an exceedingly difficult thing, and most of all common prayer; that prayer is not mere *assent* to the words which they hear, and that it is so far from being a mere expression of a *wish* that it is often rather a sharp curb to our wishes. Prayer, as St. Augustine said more particularly of the Lord’s Prayer, is “a purification of our desires”. Men should be taught that prayer is speech with God, expecting an answer and therefore awaiting it. And that because it is speech with God it assumes a sense of God’s presence. Very few have so constantly their conversation in heaven that they do not need as a preparation for every prayer the practice of the presence of God. Prayer is a temple remote, approached through groves appropriate to meditation, through an ample atrium and a solemn narthex.

Mohammedans pray on the street, in the bazaar, wherever they happen to be when the call comes for the *salât*. Travellers often wonder at their punctual piety. They would wonder more if they knew that this which seems to them prayer is only posturing, or rather that it is prayer without words. I do not say this in disparagement of the most important institution of Islam. Rather it seems to me a proof of the psychological insight of the Prophet. He prescribed a corporal exercise which not only expresses but prompts a spirit of worship. It does not pretend to be articulate prayer, but at least it is worship and it is real. But it might almost be said of

the most prominent institution of Christendom to-day that it consists of words without prayer. It is a paradox only to the ear to speak of prayers without prayer. No one can affirm that the case is impossible or even rare. For myself, I am often tormented by the thought that there may be—that actually there are—great congregations gathered together where many prayers are said and no man really prays. The priests are occupied with the phrases of their “extemporary” prayers or with their books or with their enunciation; the people try with their ears the novel phrase, may even have time to *assent* to it as they do to the familiar formula, but nobody prays, nobody speaks to God. What is that for a Church? Christ is not there! the holy angels shun it! the living dead come not near! Only those are there that “have a name that they live, and they are dead”. Even the building loses its consecration. In vain we dedicate, in vain we consecrate that church, that meeting-house where no one meets with God, that *duomo* (*domus ecclesiae*) which is not a house of God or the gate of heaven. Yet I hold a philosophy which makes it not incredible to believe that the house itself may be consecrated by the Church within it. And I have pondered over the experience recounted by others and not unlike my own, that there are some churches where one finds it not only easy but almost necessary to pray. Sometimes it is where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, — but not always. Sometimes one learns that a few persons are accustomed to meet there for silent or vocal prayer. At all events, one feels that men have prayed there and suspects that angels hover near and good souls love to linger, so that the very walls seem to have a spiritual quality, and the house itself is consecrated by prayer. But one shudders to think how few such churches there

are and wonders if few were the faithful that consecrated them. The words of Abraham supply the form of this query: Peradventure there were fifty men that prayed — peradventure but ten, yet the Lord did not go his way and cease communing with his People. It is my impression that more people pray in the Roman Churches than in the Protestant; but commonly they pray each his own prayer, looking each to his own things, voicing his own desire.

Indeed how is it possible to talk any more of *common* prayer. It is significant that we do speak much more frequently of *public* prayer or of public worship. With these phrases I can find no fault. Worship we do perform, and the fact that we do it in public is of the highest importance to the State. There is nothing that so highly concerns the State as the character of public worship. With public worship paganism was content, but Christianity essayed to unite men in common prayer.

A just sense of our delinquency must prompt us to consider and reconsider this question of common prayer as the most important that can engage our attention. It is primary not only to the problem of the reunion of Christendom but to the union of any smallest group, to the very existence of the Church. It is through somebody's delinquency that our people have so little learned what it is to pray that they go over to Christian Science or to Theosophy and do not readily recognize that what is expected of them there is not prayer at all, seeing that there is no personal God to whom they can speak. They are aware only that they are doing something more serious than ever they did before: they are meditating upon the thought of divinity, — which though it is not prayer is an indispensable preparation for prayer. If once we

recognize our failure, we shall leave nothing undone that might retrieve it. We shall be ready to put aside all our preventions and adopt any means that may practically serve to help men to pray. If free prayer be the more excellent way, we shall use that — only we shall insist that these prayers must be really inspired, as they pretend to be. If hymns — the most liturgical part of our worship — be the greatest help, we shall have more hymns and the best of them. If posturing is a help, we shall stand and kneel and genuflect and prostrate, caring not what any may think of these things. We shall demand that all hampering bonds be loosened, whether they be of law or of custom. And we shall look about with clear and eager eyes to discover if there be not some rational principles to guide us in this matter of common worship. Such indeed there are, and they are the more easy to detect and follow because they are exemplified in the earliest historical development of the Church. To this practical subject I shall devote the following chapter. Here I would say that we may have to start again with silence, the intense silence of a meeting with God, out of which historically are sprung all the authentic elements of the Christian cult.

I conclude with an indignant cry of Nietzsche's, which even in his mouth sounds like an appeal to Christians. "*Wenn es überhaupt geglaubt wird, so muss ganz anders geglaubt werden*". He speaks here of faith and believing, but I can apply this protest also to prayer and praying: *If men are at all to continue to pray, they must learn to pray quite differently.*

CHAPTER V.

COMMON PRAYER

If we are right in believing that common prayer is the very act which constitutes the Church we must seek first and above all else to pray truly and to pray together. In the text which I take to be the charter of the Church our Lord speaks expressly of prayer and requires agreement in it: "If two of you shall agree upon earth as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done for you of my Father which is in Heaven" (Mt. 18: 19). The promise of Christ's presence wherever two or three are gathered together in his name precedes this and is given as the ground for confidence in prayer. For if God be not present, it is absurd to pray: prayer can only be a way of practising self-suggestion. But if God is felt to be present, every curious difficulty about prayer vanishes away.

The Church is just so far forth united as it is united in prayer. Manifestly it is not really united except by *true* prayer. By formal prayer it can only be formally united. To be really united we must have a genuine experience in common. What unites us in the Church—and that is the profoundest fellowship we know—is the experien-

ce of fellowship with God. Apart from prayer (taking the word in its broadest sense) such fellowship is not experienced.

Reality in prayer is obviously the first requisite. We cannot pray in common until we can *pray*, and we must first learn to pray in private. It is fatal to suppose that prayer is easy. The common liturgical invitation, Let us pray, or, Let us unite in prayer, is addressed to people who do not know how to unite in prayer, have not yet learned how to pray even in private, and are perhaps unable to make a serious effort to pray by reason of some doubt about the *possibility* of prayer.

In the present inquiry we must assume the ability to pray, for nominally our problem is, not how to make men Christians, but how to unite such as are. It would be out of place to discuss here the nature or the justification of prayer, but it may be permissible to touch upon these subjects briefly inasmuch as the text we have been commenting on presents them both in a clear light. The presumption of all true prayer is the presence of God and a personal conviction of his presence. But if God is known to be present, every philosophical or scientific prejudice against prayer falls at once to the ground. It becomes then not only natural to speak to him but necessary. And it is *at least* as reasonable to make petition to him for the things that we need, even if they are material boons, as it is to make such petitions of a friend whom we believe well-disposed and capable in his measure of rendering us aid. This is the analogy which Jesus appeals to in all his parables about prayer; and it is a complete justification of prayer. We do not expect our friend to contravene the laws of the material universe, but we do expect him to change essentially the whole

bearing of the material universe upon us, as when he hands to us famishing a loaf of bread. But obviously we must immensely exalt this analogy when we apply it to God. Though we may not have unbounded confidence that God *will* answer every petition according to our will, or that he *can* answer them all at once; yet God has all means and all time at his disposal, and it would be absurd to suppose that the infinite Spirit cannot accomplish *within* his material body far more than a man can accomplish by "taking thought" within his little body and outside it. Prayer is a rational act when we believe that God hears us, and the sense of his presence compels us to pray. The recognition of our own weakness and emptiness and want in the presence of God's fullness and power compels us to cry out to him, and our prayer under this compulsion will naturally take the form of petition. Petition is therefore the most natural form of prayer. When Jesus speaks of prayer he has always in mind this most specific form, and the prayer which he taught his disciples contains nothing but petition. This is not to say that thanksgiving or praise is inappropriate. But certainly it is a mistake to suppose, as some do, that it is unbecoming to ask God for anything, or that it is more decorous to give him thanks for blessings that have come to us unasked. Not to dwell upon the fact there is much pride in this position, we may well doubt if anything is so well-pleasing to God as the humble reliance of his creatures upon his power and goodness. *Hosanna!* we know as a shout of praise; but literally it means, Help now!, and the notion is that a monarch is never so acceptably praised as when his subjects petition him for help, implying their belief in his power and their trust in his goodness.

When we truly pray we are truly united with God, and hence we are united also with one another, even if we are not praying *together*. We are still more closely united if we are praying *for* one another. I cannot despair of including the Roman Church in the reunion of Christendom in view of the experience that Roman priests and prelates have asked me to pray for them and have certainly been praying for me. That experience gives me a poignant sense of our present union in spite of all that disunites us. There is no way by which we can more clearly testify to our estimate of a man as a fellow-Christian than by asking him to pray for us, and there is no way by which we can so graciously show our own humility. Such things do deeply unite us. We are praying for one another when we pray for the union of all the Churches of God. That prayer is being made in the Roman Church as well as amongst Protestants. I am not thinking only of the ancient generic formulas, but rather of prayers specifically formulated in view of the present state of Christendom. Such a prayer, written in the first instance by a Roman priest and much later revised by me, a very large group of priests has undertaken to use.

But still we cannot pray together. And among Protestant communions this deplorable situation is largely due to the fact that we cannot agree upon the *form* in which we might make our petitions together. This thing is not impossible in small circles, particularly when we have in view only petition, which is a part of prayer which requires expression in the simplest forms of speech. Wherever we are thus united in prayer we are united as the Church of God.

But it would be foolish of us to dwell with complacency upon sporadic evidences of a fundamental unity and ignore the fact that we are nevertheless practically

separated in many ways, though it be by matters which in themselves are trivial. These trivial matters—partly for the reason that they are merely formal—have proved in time past such stubborn obstacles that now most advocates of reunion fear to approach them directly and prefer to go around some other way. But in spite of the dread that a discussion of the forms of worship may stir up old sectarian prejudices, we must begin here, for we have not begun to be practically united till we are united in common prayer. It may be said on the other hand that to be united in common prayer is to be perfectly united, and that perfection is not the first thing to be arrived at. It may, however, be the first thing to strive after. All we can do now is to begin, but this aim and this direction we must steadily keep in mind.

For the faint hearted there is always “a lion in the way.” But times have changed since the seventeenth century. Old prejudices have so far broken down that new ones have had to be invented to take their place. A sign of this is that the works of the “judicious Hooker” would be read now, if I mistake not, with the heartiest approbation by the descendents of the Puritans (if they were unaware that he writes to attack the distinctive position of their forebears); whereas these same persons could not without the liveliest feelings of revolt read any of the writings of Thomas Cartwright, the father of English Presbyterianism. It is a significant fact that the works of the foremost champion of English dissent, which originally were printed at Amsterdam to evade the English law, have never been reprinted and to-day are hardly known except by the copious extracts Hooker makes for the purpose of refuting them. To-day if they were reprinted they could have only an archaeological interest,

for in spite of the fact that Cartwright broadly represented the Puritans of his time and took no part with the extremists, no man of liberal culture to-day would accept the positions which he maintained.

It may be said that if the old prejudices of English dissent have weakened, it is because some of the goads to wrath have been abolished. The State will not again intervene with an "Act of Uniformity in Worship", and even the Anglican Churches, though they may be supercilious now and then, do not even desire any more to thrust down everybody's throat the Order for Morning Prayer. In fact the Anglican Churches are now desirous of making important changes in their own forms of worship—have indeed made notable changes in spite of the law and are seeking to make the law conform to their custom—and this fact takes away all sting from such criticism as they may now make of the heritage of other Churches, more especially as these others are far from content with their own ways. It has been said (I hope truly) that the last Lambeth Conference disposed of the delusion of the "model Church".

But all this indicates only a negative preparation, the removal of old stumbling blocks. We shall not be able to agree upon common forms for common worship unless we can discover general principles which evidently apply to this matter and unless we are ready to reopen the whole question candidly, not with the aim of effecting some compromise, but with the hope of reaching conclusions so reasonable that they will prove acceptable to all men of good will.

It is not likely that anyone will ever express better than did Richard Hooker the principles of common worship. And yet his exposition of them is not generally

serviceable in our time and for the broader purposes of reunion, because it derives its form and colour from the Puritan controversy and because, as the exigency of that controversy required, it defends and extols indiscriminately all the customs of the Church of England. Hooker had not in view the ideal of Church unity in the broader sense: he was simply seeking to persuade English dissenters to conform. For this reason I do not appeal to Hooker and have been scrupulous even not to reread at this time *The Ecclesiastical Polity*. I may owe to it more than I am aware. But in fact it is very many years since I last read it, and when this book is finished I shall be curious to ascertain how far it may happen to coincide with Hooker's principles, or how much it may have suffered by reason of my resolution to strike out upon an independent line.

I am not boasting, however, of independence; for the very same reasons which counsel me to leave Hooker to one side suggest the propriety of seeking the support of certain High-Lutheran divines of a century ago. My notion is that English-speaking Protestants are not likely to be suspicious of Lutheran theologians even if they are "high". And as a matter of fact the effort to establish in Germany a seemly Church worship after the arid reign of rationalism, though it was not generally successful, was made under conditions singularly favourable to the proponents. At least they were *free*, to a degree that no Church leaders have been before or since, to plan a complete restoration of common worship. They were thwarted not so much by party prejudice as by the inertia of the mass. But at least they succeeded in stating the abstract principles applicable to common worship and examined with candour and sympathy the practices of the early

Church in which these principles are in fact exemplified. Two of the works which originated in this movement are of such singular value that I have long had a desire to make them known to American scholars of this generation, and I am glad to be able to make use of them here. They are applicable to our present problem because we too are free from the trammels of our proximate traditions. That is to say, in contemplating the possibility of reunion we cannot any of us insist upon our present divergent customs but must find a way of uniting upon principles which are illustrated by the early and universal usages of Christendom. A form of Christian worship constructed upon general principles *a priori* and without reference to tradition would be a cold and inhuman thing. The two German books I refer to reveal a "pre-arranged harmony" between theory and tradition. The first is a brief formulation of principles by Höfling, the second is an historical study of Christian worship in Apostolic and early Catholic times by Theodosius Harnack (1).

The necessity of calling both principle and tradition to our aid would not be obvious if we had only to deal with so simple a matter as the prayer of petition. There is no part of prayer in which we can so easily unite, for

(1) Johann Wilhelm Höfling, *Composition der Gemeinde-Gottesdienst*, Erlangen, 1837. Th. Harnack, *Die christliche Gemeindegottesdienst im apostolischen und altkatholischen Zeitalter*, Erlangen, 1854. I attended one winter a seminar of Adolph Harnack's on the subject of early Christian worship and was interested to note that though he had some details to add to his father's exposition he found nothing of importance to correct in it. I say this to show that the comparatively remote date of this publication does not mean that it is antiquated.

it requires the simplest and most straightforward expression and cannot endure any other. But this is only a *part* of common prayer, and it is a still smaller fraction of that greater whole which we call common worship. As we are not thinking here of the peculiar customs of a conventicle, but rather of a common participation in public worship, the necessity of a right and concordant solution of this whole vast problem is evident and urgent. Our common worship on the greater days of assembly ought to be accessible to all Christians and ought to comprehend all the characteristic acts of Christian communion or fellowship, ought also to make these acts so audibly and visibly concordant that, in so far as our worship is public worship, the unity of the Church may be manifested to those who are without.

The Church is a fellowship (1 Jn. 1: 3), and all the acts which it performs in common worship ought to be acts of fellowship. They are not aptly performed except as they clearly manifest this their proper character. They should be both expressions of fellowship and contributions or aids to it. From this point of view Höfling seeks to co-ordinate all the parts of common worship.

Prayer, as we have seen, is pre-eminently the act by which man establishes communion (fellowship) with God and establishes at the same time the deepest communion (fellowship) with his brethren. It is the constitutive act of Christian fellowship. Hymns and psalms, so far as they are instances of prayer, have of course the same effect. But it is to be remarked that St. Paul conceives of psalmody as having a more express reference to the fellowship when he represents this as a way of "speaking *to one another*" (Ephes. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16). And if the hymns which he had in mind were actually addressed to

the brethren, as many of ours are, it is likely that we have an example of such psalmody in Ephes. 5: 14.

“Awake, thou that sleepest,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ shall shine upon thee.”

For St. Paul quotes this exhortation with such a formula as he uses in citing Scripture, and it is most plausible to suppose that he is referring to a familiar passage of the nascent liturgy. There is obviously no part of the liturgy so “liturgical” as the hymns.

In prayer, we do not address one another, and the public prayer which ostensibly is addressed to God but really is directed to the people for their admonition or instruction is not prayer. Yet our prayer is seldom without an explicit reference to the fellowship. Even in our private prayers, our Lord taught us to say, “Our Father”, “Our debts”, *etc.*, and all our common prayers, which we make *with* one another and *for* one another, are still more clearly an act of fellowship.

I need not say that the Holy Communion is an act of communion both with God and with the brethren, or that it is the clearest *expression* of this double fellowship. It needs rather to be noted that this is not the only act called “communion” in the New Testament. In fact, an early record (Acts 2: 42) distinguishes “the communion” (or “fellowship”) not only from “the Apostles’ teaching” but also from “the breaking of bread and the prayers”. And St. Paul, who speaks of the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, and speaks often of “the communion of (not simply *with*) the Holy Spirit” (*e. g.* Phil. 2: 1), does not disdain to employ this same high word, enriched by such association, for the giving of alms,—an act so material that many find difficulty in

regarding it as an act of common worship, although it generally accompanies "divine service". In the language of St. Paul the word communion when it is used absolutely ("a communion" or "the communion") refers to the collections which he was making for the poor brethren in Jerusalem (Rom. 15: 26; 2 Cor. 9: 13) or to the contributions which he had received for his own support (Phil., 1: 5; 4: 15). In Rom. 12: 13 he speaks of "communicating to the necessities of the saints", and in Heb. 13: 16 the word is used with a liturgical reference which not only justifies the act but exalts it as a part of common worship: "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased". Hitherto we have so completely failed to appreciate the aspect of communion in every act of charity that all our English versions (the Book of Common Prayer included) have hesitated to use the word and have substituted for it such cold expressions as "contribute" (or "contribution"), "distribute" (or "distribution"). If such unfeeling words did aptly denote the character of the act which we perform when we make a "collection" in the Church, it would be as much out of place in common worship as were the tables of the money-changers in the Temple.

The reading of the Holy Scripture has its place in common worship because it too is an act of communion. The Scripture and the sacred tradition which it enshrines are our common possession. We share the faith which it exhibits, and we share also the deep experiences which it records (Ephes. 3; 9; Philemon 6). Without the Scripture we could not preserve any unity of thought, and we should lose even the conformity of language and phraseology which characterizes Christendom in spite of its

divisions and renders us still intelligible to one another.

The Creed is a summary expression of the common faith which we discover in the Scripture, and it is made more manifestly an act of communion by the fact that we recite it together.

The preaching of the Word, if it is truly such, is more thoroughly an act of communion than is the reading of the ancient Scripture or the recitation of the traditional Creed. For, whether it be an interpretation and application of the Scripture or a more spontaneous reflection of individual experience in Christ, it ought to be a "living word" engrafted upon thoughts familiar or accessible to our generation, and so not merely, like the Scriptures, a potential possession but an actual communion. It is obvious that the preaching of the Word would be a livelier act of communion if many participated in the instruction and admonition of the brethren instead of delegating this function to the solitary professional preacher with his conventional sermon.

All of these primary elements — Scripture, creed, psalm, prayer, and sacrament — ought to be given a place in every solemn and complete act of common worship, and at least once upon every Lord's Day. It is clear that no act of common worship can be counted complete if it lacks its culmination in the Sacrament of Communion.

There are many occasions, however, which call for an incomplete act of communion. If the Holy Communion is reserved for stated days and for certain hours, then on other days and at other hours the formal expression of communion will necessarily be incomplete, but not the substance of it for such as have recently received the Lord's Body. For this is a sacrament which, though it

was ordained to be repeated, need not be daily or hourly repeated. The communion which it creates, the spiritual strength which it confers, is more lasting than the physical effects of our daily bread. Therefore morning and evening prayer and the "services" devised for various special occasions may be substantially complete while they are formally incomplete. It is necessary only that they be formally complete with respect to the special purpose they have in view. The many elements composing common worship may be summarily comprised under two heads; teaching and prayer. The Sacrament, if it cannot strictly be included under the second head, is at least congruous with it. When the Scripture is read the didactic element is represented, and in some cases it is sufficiently represented, even though creed and sermon are omitted. Of the various parts of prayer — confession, petition, supplication, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise (whether they be said or sung) — one or another may suffice as the special occasion suggests. Of all the elements of common worship the sermon can be most easily omitted — not because it is the least important, but because we need not to be always learning unless we be of those who never come to the knowledge of the truth. A confession of sin is not always in place, and special occasions of thanksgiving do not call for petition. I have often reflected that the sermon would be superfluous on days of thanksgiving if the people had already a lively sense of their reasons for rejoicing.

Other acts of worship there are which, according to our Lutheran guide, are not to be reckoned as expressions of communion but should be classed as acts of initiation or of benediction. Such are baptism, confirmation, absolution, the nuptial blessing, ordination, and the

burial office. These must be accounted complete when they are adequate to their particular purpose. With respect to the last three it has been commonly understood that their particular purpose implies and requires the Eucharistic Sacrament. There is one sort of Church meeting (if such it can be called) which properly excludes every element of communion but the didactic. I mean the meeting which is convened solely for the purpose of winning the outsider — in this sense a missionary meeting or a “mission”. A meeting in which the missionary aim is predominant is not so much an act of communion as an effort to bring men into communion. If those who are addressed have in common no reverence for the Holy Scripture and no sort of preparation for the Christian faith, hardly anything but the sermon is in place, — as on the occasion of St. Paul’s address at Athens. Obviously no prayer is in place, except the secret prayer by which the preacher prepares himself, or a prayer of the faithful in behalf of those whom they are seeking to win to their communion. To ask those to pray as Christians who have no faith in Christ is absurd. It assumes that the missionary aim of the meeting has already been fully accomplished or that it was from the first superfluous. If they can pray with us, they ought to receive with us the Sacrament. These considerations, though they are obviously and rigourously true, are commonly ignored; and nothing contributes more to bring Christianity into contempt or to render religion unreal than the invitation to pray, thoughtlessly addressed to such as are excluded from the Church either by unbelief or by unrepented sin.

On the other hand, it is a common fault to treat the regular assemblies as if their aim were predominantly a missionary one, to convince the unbeliever and to rally

the doubting. From this point of view the sermon assumes an importance and takes on a character which does not properly belong to it as a part of the communion of Christian worship. This is an old tradition of Protestantism. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches from the very beginning conceived that the public "divine service" was not so much an expression of a faith already existing as a means of begetting faith. Hence even the prayers were regarded hardly as an act of common worship but rather as an *example* of prayer or as an incentive to it. The missionary aim is necessary — never more necessary than now — but the pursuit of it is confused. The Christian cult is first of all not a means of begetting faith but the expression of a faith and life already existing. It will accomplish the first of these aims only in so far as it accomplishes the second, for it is certain that in a meeting where no genuine Christian life comes to evidence none will be begotten in the outsider. St. Paul has in view the missionary effect of Christian worship when he depicts the violent reaction of "one unbelieving or uninitiated" who enters the Christian meeting and hears the prophets speak: "The secrets of his heart are made manifest, and he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed" (1 Cor. 14: 24, 25). This expectation of St. Paul's, though doubtless it was founded upon experience, seems to us highly coloured. We must confess that the unbeliever or the uninitiated who comes to our meetings will hardly find reason to be so deeply moved. It is alleged that our Church services are generally conducted with a view to satisfying the "weak brother", but it is doubtful if he is really benefited by our solicitude. The sermon is often aimed at the uninitiated, — but as it were aslant, for

fear of offending the "saints". There is danger that it may fail to touch either class. And if with a missionary intent we aim our prayers at man they will reach neither heaven nor earth.

In these prime errors all our Protestant Churches so thoroughly agree that it is a wonder they remain dis-united. Yet we are not left without an example how we ought to behave. It is well known by what methods the Roman Empire was christianized, and missionaries in pagan lands now follow substantially the same ways. As early at least as the third century the custom was firmly established that the uninitiated, even if they were under instruction, might not be present at any part of the common worship in which they could not properly participate. That is to say, they were admitted to the Church only during the period of instruction, — the Scripture reading and the sermon. It could do them no harm to hear the Christians sing and confess their faith, but before the prayers they were dismissed with a prayer of the congregation in their behalf, as the penitents also were dismissed with a prayer for their recovery. In this way the *missa fidelium* was plainly distinguished from the *missa catechumenarum*. There was no jumbling together of the elements which are proper to each, — as, for example, by putting the "long prayer" *before* the sermon. We make it hard for the man who is unbelieving or uninitiated, as also for the sinner who is unabsolved. Though they are not in a condition to pray, we seem to exact it of them. It is a hard trial for an honest man to be compelled to pretend to pray. It is not to be wondered at that many only half pretend, merely crouching in their seats while others kneel. They will tell you frankly enough that they come only to hear the sermon. It is too bad that they

should be compelled to endure all the rest in which they have no communion. An outsider visiting for the first time an "Episcopal" Church expressed his impressions by saying that "the sermon was all right, but it took them too long to read the minutes of the last meeting". He may have intended to rebuke the perfunctory performance of Morning Prayer, or he may simply have wished to testify that it was inappropriate for him; but in any case he found it an impediment to his purpose of seeking instruction. "The minutes of the last meeting" might be a not inept designation for the Holy Scripture as the record of our traditions, but it ought not to apply to the sermon and still less to the prayers, which should be and plainly seem to be the order of business for the day. Things must be differently arranged in the interest of the outsider, the uninitiated, and the indifferent, — in short, for all who cannot communicate in the prayers. At a certain point the deacon might proclaim, as he did in the early Church: "Let none of the catechumens remain, none of the uninitiated, none that is unable to pray! Recognize one another. The doors!"

Sentimental persons will object that it would be a pity for these folks to miss the best part of the music, the most ambitious efforts of the choir. We do not take these things seriously enough, and there is no likelihood of our doing so until the waters are so deeply stirred that reunion is possible. Reunion must be an opportunity for recasting our customs. A reunion negotiated on the principle of compromise, as a synthesis of all our bad habits, is neither possible nor desirable.

It would be in vain to arrange the Church service with a view to the needs of different classes among the people so long as we set aside in the meeting-house no

distinctive seats for the unbeliever, the enquirer, and the penitent. And this would seem to us a pedantic imitation of antiquity. We think it more courteous to welcome all these persons to a seat along side of us, making no invidious distinctions. This, says Tertullian (*De Praescr. Haeret.*, c. 41), was the practice of heretics in his day: "In the first place, there is no distinction between the catechumens and the faithful: together they enter (the church), together they hear (the Scripture lesson and the sermon), together they pray, — even the heathen if they are present". But I am sure that this must be felt as a very great hardship by all honest unbelievers and sinners. I believe that it is their chief obstacle to coming to Church. They can come only under false pretences. Since it is accounted a pious act to go to Church — in these days an act of extraordinary piety — the sinner or unbeliever is cruelly misjudged. People say, 'Here is a churchgoer whose faith is questionable and who is no better than he ought to be'. This is unjust, for the unbeliever is there simply to enquire about the faith, and the penitent comes to be restored to righteousness. Both these misjudged sorts therefore stay away from the Church but go by thousands to a mission (by Mr. Sunday or whoever else) where it is assumed that everyone who enters is a sinner seeking salvation.

It will doubtless be said that the arrangements above described are not any longer suitable now that the world has become Christian. He must be a very ingenuous man who believes that the world to-day is more thoroughly Christian than was the Roman Empire in the fifth century. But we must leave this subject and return to our more general theme.

Each particular element of common worship -- the

Scripture lesson, the creed, the sermon, the hymn, the prayer, the Sacrament, — though it has in common with all the others the character of communion, has also its own express character which prescribes in what order and in what wise it should be performed.

In what wise? Upon this question we are agreed barely so far as to admit that there are appropriate differences in the way of performing each act. We agree that hymns are to be *sung*. But to what manner of music? And are Psalms not to be sung because they lack a convenient metre? May the Creed be sung? And is it reasonable to sing the lessons in a case where they could be heard when read in a speaking voice? It is observable that persons who sing the lessons in such a case are likely to sing the sermon. We are agreed that sermons should be preached. But may the prayers also be preached. The Sacrament should be “administered”, — but in what wise? In what posture are we to pray? in what posture to sing the hymns? in what posture to hear the Scriptures?

These are questions which no one writing on Church unity ventures to affront. Timourously we seek to make a beginning anywhere but in common prayer and content ourselves somehow with the thought of a union which leaves us unable to pray together. Confessedly, the difficulties are great. It seems impossible to persuade even Anglicans to conform. But if profound unity is unattainable without community in prayer we must trenchantly deal with the trifles which divide us. And there *are* rational criteria which determine what is right in common worship. There is only one right way, and it is only in that we can conceivably unite, for the by-paths are innumerable.

Hear what our Lutheran divines have to say. It would be vain to object that they are Lutherans, for they are not advocating peculiarities of Lutheranism. At all events, it cannot be said that they are insisting upon Anglican peculiarities and that to yield upon these points would be disloyalty to Protestant traditions and a pusillanimous capitulation to "Episcopalian" customs. What these Lutherans plead for here all Catholics and all the Orthodox both practise and commend. The practices which these Lutherans condemn in their own communion seem to many of us the peculiar heritage of the Calvinistic Churches and of English dissent. But in fact many of them have not so honourable a lineage as that, but represent merely the all-too-human slump of indolence and indifference. For example, the crouching posture in prayer and the sitting posture in hymn-singing would have been abhorred by all the Reformers and even by the dissenters of a few generations ago. For me to rebuke these practices can hardly seem invidious inasmuch as the custom of crouching in prayer has become firmly established in the "Episcopal" Church. This has been attributed, with a grim humour, to the omission from a rubric of a phrase which our American revisers thought redundant. The rubric no longer requires people to be "kneeling on their *knees*", and many imagine that they conform to it when they "kneel on their foreheads".

But why kneel in prayer? For the mere reason that it is *for us* an instinctive expression of profound reverence. All would fall upon their knees if they could see Christ entering the church. There is a tendency to inhibit the feeling of reverence when we refrain from the act which naturally expresses it. And this is so natural an act that even those who eschew the practice in Church

will kneel at family worship or at their bedside. St. Paul thought it a thing very natural and proper that an outsider on entering the Church and realizing that "God is among you indeed" should "fall down on his face". St. John in his vision of the heavenly worship beheld the four and twenty elders fall down repeatedly before the Lamb (Rev. 4: 10; 5: 8, 14). Men and women "fell down" before Jesus even in the days of his flesh (Lk. 5: 8; Mk 5: 33). The custom was as old as Moses (Deut. 9: 18). Pagan peoples also knelt in reverence (Mt 2: 11). And St. Paul when he says (Phil. 2: 10) that "in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow" implies that kneeling in prayer was the common practice of the Church. Tertullian is the only ancient Christian authour who mentions "the custom of sitting in prayer" (*De Orat. c. 16*), and he can conceive of no reason for it but one too strange to mention here. He condemns it in these words: "If it is irreverent to sit in the presence and under the eye of one whom you greatly reverence and venerate, how much more in the presence of the living God, before whom the angel stands in prayer (Rev., 8: 3, 4). This is a most irreligious act, — unless we would chide God for fatiguing us with prayer".

It must be acknowledged, however, that the custom of kneeling with a straight back and with folded hands is not an ancient one. It was the custom of the Germanic peoples (that is to say, of our race) and through them it was impressed upon the whole Western Church. It was the Jewish custom to *stand* in prayer, even in the prayer of penitence (Lk 18: 11, 13), and this practice was perpetuated in the Church. On Sundays and throughout the festal period from Easter to Pentecost Christians stood in prayer as an expression of rejoicing, and like the Jews

they spread out their hands. This custom is still maintained throughout the East. Though it is no longer the custom of the West, vestiges of it are preserved in the posture of the priest, and it would be a great pity if through indifference they should eventually be lost. The Church clings tenaciously even to its formal traditions for the sake of preserving by every means a sense of its historical continuity. This is no light matter, even if the questions at issue seem trivial in themselves, for continuity here means our historical connection with Jesus Christ. It is well that the "Episcopal" Church is now proposing to restore an old Anglican custom and permit the minister to stand while he says the first three collects of Morning and Evening Prayer. It is well that the ignorant should be taught that Anglicans are not separated from other Protestants by the fact that the latter once were accustomed to stand in prayer but by the fact that they no longer stand. At the altar at least the priest always stands as he utters the great Eucharistic prayer, and there too he *spreads out his hands*. Cf. Psalm., 134 : 2. Tertullian says (*De Orat.*, c. 14) "We do not merely lift up our hands, we spread them out", to recall the attitude in which Christ suffered. And one of the earliest representations of the Crucifixion (doors of S. Sabina, 5th cent.) depicts our Lord in the attitude of prayer. The priest who neglects to follow this custom because no rubric enjoins it must be forgetful that St. Paul enjoins (I Tim. 2 : 8) "I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands", or else he must be contemptuous of the uniting customs of the Church.

It is chiefly in connection with the Lord's Supper that vestiges of the most ancient custom are preserved. And of the most ancient costume also, for the "cloke"

which St. Paul left at Tarsus (2 Tim. 4: 13) was the *phenoles* or chasuble, a garment peculiarly appropriate for the great traveller. Commentators on the liturgy make out that the attitude of the Pope when he receives the Sacrament — half kneeling and half sitting — is a vestige of the most ancient custom of sitting at the Lord's Table.

Many make the vain excuse that they are physically unable to kneel in prayer. A young man will hardly have the face to make this excuse, and it is hardly credible that the athletic young women of this generation can make it honestly. Gymnastic directors would be well employed in teaching people how to kneel properly. It is difficult only when people mistakenly seek ease by kneeling upon a high stool. That may hurt the knees and is certain to produce curvatures of the spine. It seems almost providential that the knee is so constructed as to be *flat* when one kneels on the floor. Theologians are hardly to be blamed for seeing a teleological significance in the fact that the human knee is made for kneeling.

Nevertheless it would seem as if, without a revival of religion, there is as much hope of getting Protestant pastors to perform mass in a chasuble as of persuading men to kneel. To urge that it is the only custom that conceivably could become universal has no more effect upon them than the fact that the sign of the Cross was from most ancient times the universal accompaniment of prayer. All such customs are condemned when they are described as Anglican or Roman, — though the Apostles doubtless practised the first, and not improbably the second. The obstacle to conformity in such matters is the temper of prejudice, and so long as such a temper prevails we shall not be united even if we recognize one bishop. If all will not agree to kneel in prayer, I am

ready for my part to agree to stand. Only let us not sit, for sitting implies, what is all too commonly the case, that one is *listening* to an edifying prayer. To make it possible for people to pray — to make them understand even that they are expected to pray — we must require them either to stand or to kneel.

This is not urged for the sake of gratifying an antiquarian interest. It must be confessed that there are many ancient customs which to us appear so topsy-turvy that there can be no thought of imitating them. It was undoubtedly the ancient custom of the Church for the teacher to *sit* while his hearers stood. Now the bishop alone exemplifies this ancient custom, and that only on a few formal occasions. This again seems a trifling matter to persons who deride every formality. Yet it links us to the days when Jesus “sat” and taught his disciples in the synagogue (Lk., 4: 20) and in the desert (Mk., 5: 1). And it illuminates the significance of the common expression, an episcopal *see* (*i. e.* seat), — with a glimmer hardly sufficient, however, to lead anyone to the perception that it is the *seat* which makes the bishop, or, in other words, that the bishop is simply the person who occupies Christ’s seat at the Lord’s Table. The men who are all for progress and the “forward vision” might reflect that, if no other Christians were unlike them, there would be left to us now no resemblance at all to the ways of the early Church, no slightest vestige of the customs of Christ and his Apostles, and we might now be requiring worshipers to stand upon their heads, as do the adepts of some of the mystic cults in vogue among us.

By some persons, doubtless, the suggestion of kneeling in prayer will be regarded as the “entering wedge.” If you kneel, they might say, why not also genuflect. And,

indeed, why not? In one case, at all events, the priest is obliged to genuflect, if he would not receive the Sacrament with less show of reverence than the people, who take it kneeling, and if on the other hand he would not set aside the old custom which requires him to receive it standing, as all Christian people did as late as the eighth century. It occurs to me to say here with regard to the Lord's Supper (though I am anticipating the theme of the following chapter), that whosoever professes to believe that the bread and wine of the Sacrament are in any sense whatsoever the Body and Blood of Christ would do well to play the part to the end and treat the elements in every respect *as if* they were what we profess them to be. If one object that they are such "only" in a spiritual sense, why are they for that reason deserving of the less reverence? Very gross irreverence in the treatment of the Sacrament would scandalize every Christian. It is not only a shock to one's faith as an implication of unbelief, it is an offence also to one's taste as an inconsistency in make-believe. It is foolish to suppose that we are bearing a noble and necessary witness against the doctrine of transubstantiation when we refuse to show any sign of reverence for the Sacrament, for this reverence and all the ways we have of showing it are older than this doctrine and independent of all the theories by which the *reality* of Christ's presence is explained. I presume that no Christians approach the Sacrament without reverence of heart; but many are inhibited, by conscious or unconscious prepossession, from giving due expression to the reverence they truly feel, and until they can free themselves from these restraints we shall not generally be able to "come together unto one place" to communicate in the Lord's Supper. I can

speak with the more freedom on this subject because it is not a denominational difference I have in mind. It is a difference which within the Anglican Church creates real division; and I have often reflected that concord might be restored if only all would act *as if* the solemn words which they utter were true. Many seem to act like the augurs that winked.

On the same plane is the custom of bowing the knee at the name of Jesus. It is a custom which is not discredited when it is pointed out that the King James Version errs in its translation of Phil. 2: 19, where instead of, "*At* the name of Jesus every knee should bow", it ought to read, "*In* the name". Doubtless "*In the Name*" means much more than "*At the name*" — so much more, in fact, that one might think that this little practice must be included in it. The little practice itself means much more than merely a conventional gesture. It is an expression of profound reverence for the meekness of God which was manifested in the Incarnation; hence a genuflection is peculiarly in place when in the Creed we recite the phrase, "*And was made man*"; and hence also this custom (more ancient than any English version) does really attach itself to St. Paul's sublime argument in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, — which in the Latin version is *not* mistranslated and in the Greek Churches is not misunderstood.

I write this not with the vain expectation of persuading anybody to bow the knee at the name of Jesus, but with the more modest hope that this, and other like things which I set down here, may incline some persons to be less contemptuous of their brethren. That is the first step — the step we have to take just now.

The Anglican Church is divided (though without bit-

terness) over the question of turning towards the east at the Creed — or towards that part of the church which in a Pickwickian sense is regarded as the east because it is the place of the high altar. The custom originated in the early baptismal ritual, which prescribed that the candidate be turned towards the west for the *abrenuntio* (the renunciation of sin and darkness) and then towards the east, the source of light, for the recitation of the baptismal creed. This custom as it is now perpetuated in public worship is surely a harmless one and even rather pretty. Both Paul and John find in darkness and light an apt analogy to sin and the revelation of righteousness. Tertullian laughs at the pagans who believed that the Christians were sun worshippers because they prayed towards the east, — just as some missionaries in India have been thought by their servants to be worshippers of chairs because they were seen kneeling before their chairs at family worship. But we incur no danger of such suspicion now, and it would seem to me as if the popular celebration of Christmas Day (the Festival of the Unconquered Sun) ought to dispose people kindly to this slighter but oft-recurrent attention to the sun. This is in itself a very little matter, and it has the less importance for Church unity owing to the fact that it involves only the attitude of the officiating minister, the people being turned in that direction from first to last. But because it is a little matter, and because no serious scruple can be raised against it, it is the more instructive as a test question, to discover whether we have any desire to conform, merely for the sake of conformity and peace.

The question of posture involves us in endless disquisitions. To do the right thing is very much more simple than to talk about it. It occurs to me to say here that

the very same reason (*i. e.* a desire for conformity) which ought to prompt us to conform to the custom just referred to, ought to have restrained the "Episcopal" Church from inventing the custom, unknown to Christendom, of turning to the east at the *Gloria Patri*, which involves on the part of the choir frequent military evolutions highly entertaining to the boys but hardly edifying to the congregation. And it must be urged that, if we are to reach any general conformity in worship, the "ritualists" should be scrupulous to avoid strange customs before they require others to adopt the common ones. For discredit is cast upon all ritual if in many cases it is apparent that there is no good reason why the thing should be done.

For example, the custom of reading the Gospel and Epistle with one's back turned to the people is one in behalf of which no good reason can be urged. It is not felt to be unreasonable in the Roman Church at a low mass where perhaps no one is expected to assist except the server and where the Scriptures are read in an unknown tongue. But with us it is reprehensible, not only because it is an outlandish act of nonconformity, but because it is ridiculous.

I blame, but not so severely, another sort of priest who, without even the countenance of a doubtful precedent, turns with the Gospels in his hands towards the altar at the *Gloria tibi*. At that moment there is nothing so sacred in the Church as the Gospels, and the people turn to *it*, not to the altar.

All of this and somewhat that is to follow will seem to most persons petty, — because they have not, as St. Paul *had* (I Cor. 11: 16), a sense of the importance of conformity with all the Churches of God.

As a youth I vexed my righteous soul about the attitude I commonly observed at family prayers. For the discussion of such a subject my father was not approachable, and it is belated now to recur to it when family prayer is hardly anywhere observed. But my childish criticism serves, I think, to prove — not only that I was predestinated to write pedantically as I am now doing, but — that about the whole question of attitude in prayer a profound indifference prevails and a strange confusion of mind. My criticism was not directed so much against the attitude of each individual, — though that was not a reverent posture for prayer but a sinking of the face upon the cushions of a chair. What scandalized me chiefly was the fact that all, having their chairs turned towards the leader during the reading of the Scripture, turned their backs to one another when they prayed, — hardly implying community in prayer and clearly excluding the notion that Christ might be “in the midst of them”. No one would paint a picture of the Apostles at Pentecost kneeling in a circle with their backs to one another. The unreality of the thing had no small part, I am inclined to believe, in the abandonment of family worship.

When such customs prevail how can it be expected that people will take an interest in such a question as the place and attitude of the minister who leads the congregation in prayer? Yet our Lutheran divines have much to say on this subject. Höfling contemplates the case that the Holy Communion does not follow the sermon and insists that the office of prayer which must follow should not be confounded with the sermon nor subordinated to it, — “as is the far too common custom of our own Church”, he confesses, “which crowds almost the whole service of prayer into one single long prayer which is said

immediately after the sermon and from *the pulpit*". With respect to the one point which interests us here he adduces the following reasonable considerations. "The pulpit is not the place for the conduct of the liturgical worship of the Church". (He uses the phrase "*liturgical* worship" in order that he may not be understood to exclude the free prayer which might properly accompany the sermon, either as a preparation for it or as its sequel). "The pulpit, as the Church-orator's platform, is directed towards the congregation. The people face it as listeners. Nothing can properly be uttered there but what is addressed to the congregation. But prayer — if it is really a prayer and not, as in the earlier use of our Church, simply an 'exhortation to prayer' — absolutely excludes all notion of addressing the congregation. It is spoken not *to* the congregation but *by* the congregation, and it is addressed exclusively to God. In view of this its specific character prayer can properly be said only at that place where the congregation sacramentally consummates the mystery of its deepest communion with the Lord, and which therefore symbolically represents the exclusive direction of the heart which turns to God, that is to say, at the Table of the Lord's Supper, the Altar of the Church. And it follows that the leader in prayer (the liturge), since in this act he does not face the people with a commission from God, but on the contrary stands before God with a commission to represent the people, must have behind him the people whose leader and representative he is, and standing in front of them he must face the altar. The opposite custom is liturgical *ataxia*".

But what if there be no altar? or if the altar is so seldom used, or is so abused, that it cannot serve symbolically to give direction to prayer? Then whither are

we to turn? This case is of course the commonest with us. It is not so very long ago that in many "Episcopal" Churches the altar was the place where the preacher deposited his hat and umbrella. In Baptist Churches the font occupies the place of the altar; in most other Churches it is the organ. In such a case there is nowhere to turn but towards one another. And that is not unseemly. If the altar stand between the priest and the people — as it did in the earliest time, as it has ever stood in the Papal Churches in Rome, and as the English Reformation desired that it should stand, it would serve perfectly to give direction to our prayers and to indicate that "God is among us indeed".

Here is a point where Höfling's theory runs away with him because he fails to test it by the common practice of the Church. The most natural and appropriate thing in family worship, or in the case of any homogenous group where the sense of solidarity is strong, would be for all the members to face one another. The circle of the Apostles is thus represented in art, and it is impossible to suppose that in the earliest assemblies of the Church the individuals who arose here and there to exercise the gift of prayer had to march to the front of the room and turn their backs to the brethren. The Scripture gives us no hint how the company was seated except when it was gathered around the Lord's Table; and yet we may be sure that the situation was substantially what we are accustomed to in the "prayer-meeting". It is to be observed that in the prayer-meeting the brethren who lead in prayer do *not* face the congregation. Their instinct in this case is perfectly sound. In the monastic communities, however, the brethren were accustomed to face one another, whether they met in the chapter room or

in the choir. The choir offices of the clergy, being derived from the monastic use, retained this arrangement; and when these offices were raised by the English Reformers to the dignity of public worship the choir and clergy remained where they were accustomed to sit, and the congregation was brought into the circle.

In none of these cases is there any danger that the prayer will be confused with the sermon, — more especially as no sermon was originally thought of in connection with Morning and Evening Prayer. But the danger is very real when the prayer is uttered from the pulpit and by the individual who a moment earlier was functioning in the rôle of a preacher. Of this situation Höfling affirms: “It is contrary to all right psychological principles to perform two such opposite and independent functions as preaching and prayer directly after one another, at the same spot, and in the same breath” — with the result (I here summarize) that it is difficult for the preacher in a moment’s time to conceive of himself in a new rôle and almost impossible for the people to understand that what is now required of them is not the attention of listeners (as during the sermon) but active participation in prayer, in which they are agents as truly as the minister, with the sole difference that they do not utter the words aloud.

A much thornier theme of dispute is the question whether written or “extemporaneous” prayers are to be preferred. As a matter of fact the question is rarely put in so reasonable a form. We are more likely to hear “book prayers” roundly denounced as intolerable in the Church of God. And on the other hand there have been some so unreasonable as to wish to exclude from public worship, not only all free or spontaneous prayers, but even such as the leader has himself composed with

careful consideration to suit the occasion. These opinions are obviously unreconcilable, but to-day there are very few that hold them, and this question will no longer prove a stubborn obstacle to reunion if men will regard it as *practical* matter and not as matter of religious principle. Both practically and as a matter of principle it seems reasonable to require that a studied prayer, if it is to be admitted for use in public worship, must be well studied, and that a spontaneous prayer must bear some marks of being really inspired by the Holy Ghost. On the other hand it ought to be considered whether a spiritual prayer (*i. e.* an inspired one) does not remain spiritual *after* it is once uttered and does not for this reason deserve to be repeated. It does not seem to me impossible that, accepting these positions, we might find a way to agree.

The Quakers have only one flaw in their logic. They are entirely right in requiring that no word be uttered in the Meeting which is not prompted by the Spirit of God. Any other word is in fact an impertinence. St. Paul implies that "teaching", though a lower gift than prophecy, is a spiritual gift, and St. Peter (I Pet. 4: 11) requires that if any speak in the Church he must "speak as the oracles of God". It is assumed that the "psalms, hymns, and songs" which are contributed by each for the edification of the Church must be "spiritual" (Ephes., 5: 19; Col. 3: 16; *cf.* 1 Cor. 14: 26). If all the constituents of common worship are spiritual, the whole of it may rightly be regarded as inspired. That does not mean the same as *inerrant*, it does not imply perfection, but affirms that at least our worship is "profitable" (like the Scriptures) and that being "God-breathed" it is *good*. But what is good one day will not be bad on an-

other. Does it not remain inspired? And is there no such thing as a gradual accretion of inspired prayers and hymns? Must every Meeting of the Church begin anew at the same point, as if it were the first assembly ever held in Christendom, or as if no minutes of the last meeting had been preserved? Those who act as if such were the case ask too much of the Holy Spirit and slight the gifts already bestowed. It is logical rather to suppose that every inspired contribution to the worship of the Church will be more edifying as it is more used and becomes dear and familiar, and that by unobserved increments it will become more inspired, more nearly perfect. In this way the divine liturgy actually came about. It was the work of "prophets and teachers", — their chief work and their noblest monument.

The logical flaw in the Quakers' position is glaringly evident in the case of hymns. Whatever may have been the character of the "psalms, hymns, and songs" which St. Paul refers to, and whatever we may take to be the distinctions between them, it is certain that they were formal compositions composed with art. That, in St. Paul's view, did not make them the less "spiritual". It did, however, insure that they could be retained by the memory, and there can be no reasonable doubt that they were intended for repeated use. If in the course of time they became established in favour they became a part of the liturgy. The question whether the Church had a liturgy in the days of the Apostles resolves itself into the question whether there were any Christian psalms, hymns, or songs; for such elements as these were doubtless the nucleus of the earliest liturgies and they remain the most liturgical part of our worship. The Revelation of St. John (especially chapters 4, 5, 11 and 15) furnishes numerous

examples of the psalmody of the early Church. It has been plausibly suggested that the psalms which the Third Gospel attributes to Mary, Zacharias and Simeon were taken from the psalter of the Church. The form of Hebrew poetry was impressed not only upon the *Gloria in excelsis* and other early Christian hymns, but upon all the more exalted passages of the liturgy.

It is noteworthy that Christian psalmody of the earliest time was devoted almost exclusively to expressions of praise and thanksgiving. In fact, this is the part of prayer which demands the most exalted expression. The prayer of petition calls for no special "gift" but only for sincere desire. In the early liturgies the deacon's exhortation to prayer (which is simply a method of *uniting* the people in silent prayer) comports better with the straightforward simplicity of the prayer of petition than do the Latin collects. It is also more effective as a method of *leading* in prayer than is the so-called bidding prayer still used in the Church of England, or even than the litanies. A short while ago it seemed incredible that so remote a custom could be revived in Protestant circles. No custom that I recommend in this book is more archaic. Yet this has now become the prevailing custom in missionary circles and in the Student Federation where men feel keenly the need of prayer for specific boons.

If petition only were in question, our liturgies would seldom reach the heights which are described as liturgical. Only in the climax of petition, in supplication for comprehensive redemption, is lofty language in place. For example in the *Trisagion*: Holy Lord God, Holy Mighty God, Holy Immortal God, have mercy upon us".

But there is no language too high for praise, nor any art too perfect. The "odes" of the Revelation exemplify

the same lively interaction — choir answering choir and people answering the priest — which is characteristic of the liturgies and which is manifestly appropriate to *common* worship.

If such be the origin of the liturgies of the Church, it would be unreasonable to refuse to recognize in them any character of inspiration. It is well, however, that we should not regard them as inspired so long as we are not able to free ourselves from a mechanical notion of inspiration which makes it equivalent to inerrancy. This notion of inspiration is not applicable to our prayers, but neither is it applicable to the Holy Scripture. We have no religious need of affirming of our prayers that they are inerrant or in any wise perfect. But in fact we have no religious need of affirming of the *historical* books of the New Testament that they are in *any* sense inspired, though doubtless they are. It suffices us to know that they are in the main faithful reports. To apply the conception of inspiration to the sayings of Jesus would be inept because inadequate. In the case of the Epistles, however, — that is, the didactic portion of the New Testament — we do desire to know that they are “God-breathed”. That perception enhances the authority which they possess for us in the mere experience that they are indeed “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness”. We have also a religious interest in knowing that our common prayers are inspired and profitable for their particular use. If inspiration be in any way possible or conceivable, it is clearly never so necessary as in the common prayers of the Church, in order that Christians may be able to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And, in fact, St. Paul, with the perception that “we know not how to pray as

we ought", affirms that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmity" (Rom. 8: 26).

The Quakers are nice people, but they are most illogical when they refuse to admit that prayers once produced by inspiration may be worthy to be repeated. As a result of this error they remain without any common formula in which the people can unite to express their common worship. They are so consistent in this error that they will not admit even the use of the Lord's Prayer. Perhaps the root of their error is to be found in their denial of a principle which St. Paul affirms (1 Cor. 14: 15), that one can pray with the Spirit and pray with the understanding also, sing with the Spirit and sing with the understanding also. It requires some understanding to compose a prayer which is fit to be repeated or even fit to be once uttered in the Church. It requires still more understanding to compose a hymn. Hence the Quakers lack these things.

But surely those Protestants are still more illogical who admit the use of hymns (the most formal part of the liturgy) and eschew all other formal prayers even if the form be as appropriate and as sublime as that of the hymns. The line of distinction which they draw is more clearly illogical when they discriminate in favour of hymns which are written in modern meter and rhyme while they discountenance the musical rendering of the psalms of the old and New Testaments and of the early Church which are in the forms of Hebrew poetry. They make a virtue of condemning all music which they have not the skill to render. Their professed attachment to the Apostolic age does not dispose them to favour the Gregorian tones even though Protestant scholars are inclined to trace them not only to the Church of the Apostles but to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Certain branches of the Reformed Church seek to be more consistent by forbidding the use of any hymns except the "Psalms of David" (in a modern metrical version), on the ground that Christian psalms and hymns are not inspired. They eschew also (in spite of David's harp) all instrumental music because it has no express warrant in the New Testament.

But there is another consideration in favour of the use of hymns and prayers long used in the Church, and it seems to me more imposing even than the idea of inspiration. I have in mind the idea of *consecration*. This idea attaches in the highest conceivable sense to the prayers and hymns (and to the prayers no less than to the hymns) in which generations of Christian men and women have lifted up their desires unto God and poured out their praise. Such consecrated formulas we may regard as the "matter" of the sacrament of prayer. Whatever we may think of their origin, they have become for us truly *spiritual*: they are inspiring if they are not inspired. They are not only apt forms for expressing our common worship (as other modern forms might be), they are an inspiration to prayer.

All this is true even if many fail to feel the inspiration of inspired and consecrated prayers and listen to them without attention. Familiar phrases, though they grow dear, grow also trite. At all events, against *unfamiliar* prayers I can urge arguments which, though they are on a lower plane than the above, are still more evidently conclusive. It is impossible to speak to this point without seeming to "syllogize invidious verities", (to use a phrase of Dante's), and therefore I prefer to quote from our Lutheran divines.

But first I would say all that I know how to say in favour of extempore prayer in common worship.

It would not be just to insist upon the word *extempore*, for "the unwritten liturgy of our pulpits" is hardly to be regarded as a sudden inspiration. And it would be unkind to say that the prayer carefully prepared by the preacher differs from "liturgical" prayers only in the fact that it is not well prepared. In a measure this is true. Rarely does one hear a prayer from the pulpit which would pass muster in a book. But this is not a conclusive objection against free prayers; for what chiefly makes them to differ and often causes them to be preferred is a certain impression of spontaneity, which even though it be fictitious does not always fail to make an effect. The very faults of such a prayer may serve to enhance the impression of spontaneity; for this effect is nullified by any sign of study or of art, or even by such an orderliness of thought as might arouse a suspicion of preparation. An "extempore" prayer which is obviously prepared with studious thought has no advantage over one which is written and printed, unless it happens to be a better prayer.

The liking for prayers of an "inspirational" or "spiritual" sort is not now-a-days a Protestant peculiarity. In the Roman Church, along side of the Latin liturgy, which is inaccessible to the people and has become strange to them for its sculptural sobriety, there has grown up in all the vernaculars a heterogenous fashion of prayer — ejaculatory, abrupt, sentimental — which is prized for its very defects, for its logical incoherency and for the fact that it springs from one mood to another, confounding in one sentence petition, praise and intercession. For myself I like these prayers no better than the similar effusions common in our Protestant Churches. Yet I am ready to believe that they may be inspiring to many

who use them in private. In the Roman Church such prayers are printed, but it is only in private they are used. The Protestant Churches will not print their prayers but will use no other sort in public worship. My notion is that such prayers as we have here in mind, even if they be not prayers that can be prayed, may serve to suggest themes for meditation, or themes about which one can weave one's own prayer *con variazioni*. I believe, however, that there are good and objective grounds for asserting that such prayers are inept for common worship, more especially in large groups.

Or are we to suppose that the modern mind must have modern prayers to suit it, as it has modern music, modern art, modern poetry, and modern dances? Are the prayers of the early Church and of the middle ages now hopelessly antequated? Must we now have *prière libre* or jazz prayers? These questions are pertinent to us all. For in the Roman Church the stately language of the liturgy is unknown to the people, and in the Anglican Churches the effort to write new prayers in the old manner is not commonly successful. Anglicans commonly seek to imitate the classical collect, but without sufficient regard to the rules of this art, the first and last word of which is Unity. It is only a near-collect which expresses more than one mood of prayer or contains heterogenous petitions. In writing a collect one is as much bound by rule (though by no rule so precise) as in writing a sonnet. A sonnet in *verse libre* hardly makes a more disagreeable impression than a prayer in what might be called *prière libre*. I am not unmindful of the fact that empty collects can be written in perfect conformity with all the rules of art, as a foolish sonnet can be written with all the appropriate rhymes. The Book of Common Prayer furnishes

not a few examples. I have no prejudice in favour of the classical collect. I am disposed rather to dread "lest by one good custom we corrupt the world". It is a misfortune that the Book of Common Prayer contains, apart from the Liturgy, hardly any prayers but collects. It would be absurd to eschew all forms of poetry except the sonnet.

But there are general rules which apply to the production of our prayers, in whatever form we may elect to couch them. In writing poetry one is mindful of the rule that it must be "simple sensuous and passionate". It is a rule which does not precisely apply to prayer, inasmuch as the language of our prayer need not be sensuous. But surely it must be "passionate" (in the same sense that poetry is), and above all it must be *simple*. Simplicity is the first requisite for common prayer. Complicated prayers are the greatest hinderance to prayer in common. I do not dare to reckon how great a proportion of Christians have abandoned the effort to overcome this obstacle and no longer try to pray together. We may be obliged in the face of the present emergency to discard all our verbal prayers, prepared or unprepared, and learn once more to pray together in silence. It was out of the habit of silent prayer that the historic liturgies arose and assumed their form.

But if we are to pray in common, and that "not with the Spirit only, but with the understanding also", we must heed such considerations as Höfling urges with regard to common prayer.

"The Church prayers are spoken not *to* the congregation but *by* the congregation; they are the prayers of all the fellow-members, must proceed from all directly and originally, and all must have substantially the same

share in them. This would clearly not be the case if the individuality and subjectivity of a single person were prominent, if the common prayer were the free production or the arbitrary selection of the leader. Everything that is new, individual and freely produced prompts to query or criticism, and in this mood of judgment and criticism, of strained attention and expectation, it is impossible to pray *with* the leader or even effectively to *follow* him in his prayer. Common prayer is possible only where there is agreement beforehand about the contents of the prayer so that every individual knows the end from the beginning and is not left to wonder what is next to be required of him. Hence the prescription of a well known and familiar formula is the only means of insuring the freedom and equality of all the participants and of making the Church prayers in any real sense common prayer. It is as reasonable that in common prayer the minister should be fettered as that in the sermon he should be free”.

This seems to me irreproachable logic. It agrees also with the ancient and almost universal tradition of the Church. Yet neither tradition nor theory excludes absolutely the use of free prayer. The *Didache* (at the beginning of the second century) leaves the prophet free to utter as the Spirit moves him even the Eucharistic prayers; though it binds the bishop to the formula (a far cry from the *jus liturgicum*!). The Anglican Churches in practice do not preclude the minister from using in the Church prayers which occasions unprovided for by the book evidently prompt, or really free and extemporary prayers which are prompted by the sermon and prepared for by it. The theory only excludes prayers for which the people are unprepared. Many Christians are content with meditation, supposing it to be prayer. That delusion is one

of the great obstacles to prayer in common. The other great obstacle is the notion that without any preparatory meditation men can pray. I hardly know which is the more pernicious delusion.

At bottom the question is whether we regard common prayer as a matter serious enough to deserve preparation and difficult enough to require it. I affirm that it is the most important matter the Church can take in hand and that the difficulties attending it are so great that many have renounced the effort to pray in common without suspecting that they have done so. It is not easy for the individual to pray; it is incomparably more difficult to unite a multitude in prayer; and unless we are content with a pretence of prayer we must devote more time and appropriate effort to the preparation for prayer. A stirring sermon might serve to unite the congregation in the spirit of prayer. But in most of our Churches the prayers have nearly all of them been said *before* the sermon. In any case meditation is necessary, both to divorce the mind from the distractions of the world and to fix it upon God as really present and able to help as well as to hear. We need to allow time for meditation to pass naturally and imperceptibly into silent prayer. But for silent prayer we offer too little opportunity in our Protestant Churches, and silent prayer, if it is to be prayer in common, needs to be guided in particular channels. It seems to me doubtful whether we can at present do anything more practical than to unite people in silent prayer. This *can* be done, in small groups at least, and in the practice of silent prayer the varieties of religious custom no longer divide us.

The Revelation of St. John, in depicting the celestial assembly for worship, notes that "there was silence in

heaven for the space of about half an hour". This suggests that periods of silence in worship are to be regarded not merely as a confession of our ineptitude but rather as the appropriate counterpart of our prayer of petition, in so far as this is a request for guidance or illumination. For it is indecent to ask for these great gifts if we care not sufficiently for them to wait for an answer. It seems to us quite natural that a certain preparation of mind should be required for a spiritistic seance, and a patient waiting for the expected result, whereas without any preparation we expect to enter into communion with the Spirit of Truth and are too impatient to wait for a revelation. We use prayer to prepare ourselves for the Holy Communion and even for the sermon, but what prepares us for prayer?

That the early Church did not take this matter so lightly is shown by the conjunction of fasting with prayer (Acts 13: 3; 14: 23; 1 Cor. 7.5). Fasting was valued both as a preparation for prayer and as a means of disposing the mind for the reception of a spiritual gift or a revelation (1).

The early Catholic Church was sensible of the peculiar difficulty of common prayer and used due diligence to overcome it. The device which it employed to this effect is suggested in the brief description which Justin Martyr gives of the Sunday worship of the Church about the

(1) For this reason it was associated with ordination both in primitive and in Catholic practice, — and with revelation *Murat. Fragm., l. 11*. "Fast with me three days, and what is revealed to each we shall relate to one another". *Hermas, Vision III, 112*, "Having fasted often and prayed to the Lord that he would make known to me the revelation".

beginning of the second century (1), and it is clearly formulated in the earliest liturgies (2). The prayer which follows the Scripture reading and the sermon Justin describes as a common prayer in the strictest sense, in which all join upon an equal footing and are all active, so that no one need be singled out expressly as the leader. This can be nothing else but the silent prayer which the practice of a later age makes familiar to us. Essentially it was the silent prayer of the people; but, as it must be also their common prayer, one of their number (later it was always the deacon) indicated at intervals appropriate themes for their petition, to which the people responded with some such cry as, 'Lord, have mercy'. Anciently this device was never employed for any purpose but petition. This, according to Justin, was followed at a later point by other prayers, more closely related to the Eucharist and uttered by the "president", so that the people, not being so immediately active, claim the prayer as their own by the 'Amen' which they say at the end of it.

It is a striking fact that in the early liturgies the substance of the deacon's bidding prayer is repeated (for the most part in the same language) in the solemn supplication made by the priest. This is not a "vain repetition". It is evidently a way devised for overcoming

(1) Namely, in the distinction he makes between the prayers which the people first make in common — "Then we all stand up together and make prayers" — and those which "the president of the brethren" makes in their name and to which they respond with an "Amen" — "And the president offers prayers and thanksgivings, and the people respond with the Amen", *Apol. c. 67*. See Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst. pp. 237-268*.

(2) The προσφώνησις of the deacon followed by the ἐπίκλησις of the bishop or presbyter.

some of the difficulties of common prayer. I cannot imagine a better way. I have often resorted to it in common worship, and I have reason to think it has always been with success. For the deliberate meditation upon each subject of petitions as they are suggested one by one, and the opportunity to turn such meditation into prayer, is surely the best possible preparation for the more solemn action at the altar which 'collects' all these petitions into one great prayer which the representative of the people presents to God.

The Western Church did not long maintain the use of the diaconal *prosphonesis*. The litanies in a measure took the place of it. For the litany, though it is in the form of a direct address to God, utters severally each petition, with the popular response following. It seems to me that the Anglican reform of the Litany lumped too many petitions together. The short interval allowed for the response hardly allows for the affirmation of *several* petitions, especially if they are not homogenous. More closely akin to the old form is the "bidding prayer", which for a long while after the Reformation was almost the only sort of prayer in common use in the Lutheran Churches, and which was retained in the Anglican Church for use before or after the sermon. Like the diaconal *prosphonesis* it is merely an exhortation to prayer, but it is unlike it in the fact that it expects from the people no audible response, and therefore, as it is traditionally used, it leaves no interval for silent prayer. Presumably the Reformers, both in Germany and in England, did not regard it as a way of leading in prayer but rather as an instruction how to pray, that is to say, for what objects men ought to pray. This sort of prescribed instruction was common to the Lutheran and the Reformed agenda,

the English Book of Common Prayer not excepted. This reflects the opinion (very trenchantly expressed by Luther) that the people, after a millenium and a half of Christianity, were so ignorant of the nature and purpose of common worship that they needed instruction about it at every recurrence of divine service. The exhortations obviously represent an effort to make common prayer a reality, yet they rather imply that it is an impossibility. For they suggest that the congregation is not composed of the faithful (*fideles*) but of individuals who differ little from catechumens and hence are still in need of instruction about the rudiments of faith and duty (the recitation of the Ten Commandments is an example) and the nature of the very worship they are engaged in. This presumption would seem to imply that Christian communion in the deepest sense is not yet possible.

These exhortations apparently have served their purpose and are no longer necessary, for the "Episcopal" Church has felt free to make the use of the longer ones optional. And yet the people still need to be instructed about the fundamental proprieties of worship.

The Greek liturgies prescribe another sort of exhortation to be uttered by the deacon. It is simply an exhortation to pray, yet not a mere invitation like the *Oremus* of the Latin rite. The deacon repeatedly cries, "Let us bow the neck unto the Lord", "Again and again in the fear of the Lord let us pray", "Let us pray earnestly unto the Lord". In a few places the Book of Common Prayer has the exhortation, "Let us pray", in the midst of a series of prayers. By many this is thought to be a redundancy. But if we stop to reflect upon the probability that some in the congregation are inattentive to the prayers, upon the possibility that no one in the

whole Church is actually praying, these gentle invitations will not seem superfluous, and it might be well if more frequently and more drastically the people were exhorted or admonished to continue in prayer.

We have a larger matter to deal with when we take up the question of the order of worship. Höfling again furnishes a helpful suggestion when he ranks the various acts which compose common worship according to their value as expressions of Christian communion. One may be sceptical about the possibility of determining the appropriate order of all the acts of worship by reference of any abstract consideration. But when it is observed that the result corresponds with the order which was actually followed by the early Church the theory is so far forth justified and may be recommended to those who are ignorant of the tradition or indifferent to it. After all no one is so sceptical as to deny that there is *some* principle governing the order of divine service. We imply the existence of some such principle whenever we condemn a given sequence as in itself absurd or unreasonable, and not merely contrary to our custom. For example, no one would think of putting the sermon *after* the Holy Communion. *That* we should agree to condemn, not merely as an innovation but as a thing essentially unreasonable. We would agree also that the Scripture lesson ought not to come after the sermon. That, however, represents pretty much all we are agreed about. Yet these two points of agreement furnish us with a rule which is broadly applicable. For in these two cases we agree that the highest act of communion must come last. That implies a climactic sequence ruled by the principle that every act of common worship should come in the order

of its value as an act of communion. This rule is realized when we put the Scripture reading before the sermon, for though the Bible has in itself a higher value than the sermon, it has less value as an act of communion, if the sermon is really a lively communication to the hearers of the things that have been read.

In practice we differ with regard to the place that prayer should occupy in relation to the sermon. And yet the above rule manifestly applies. Prayer is more profoundly an act of communion than the sermon and inferior in this respect to the Sacrament. Accordingly, the order of common worship should be: Scripture, sermon, prayer, sacrament. And in fact such was the order of Christian worship on the Lord's Day as it was described early in the second century by Justin Martyr (1). In chapter 67 of the *Apology* Justin gives the following account:

“On the day which is called after the sun there is a gathering at one place of all the dwellers in the cities and the surrounding country, and the memorials of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as time permits. Then when the reader has ceased the president in an address gives admonition and encouragement to imitate the things that have been read. Then we all rise in common and make prayers. And, as we have said (c. 65), when our prayer is ended bread is brought and wine and water, and the president according to his ability

(1) *The Apology*, written not later than 139 A. D., was the first account written by an insider with the aim of making clear to outsiders the general character of Christian worship. Pliny, who about twenty years earlier described the worship of the Christians for the information of the Emperor Trajan, was himself an outsider and for this reason was not able to give so reliable an account.

offers prayer and likewise thanksgivings, and the people respond with the Amen. And then occurs the distribution of the eucharisticized elements and their reception by each, and to such as are not present they are carried by the deacons. Those who are able and willing give of their free will, each what he is minded to, and what is collected is deposited with the president and he supports therewith orphans and widows, or such as through sickness or other cause are in need, and those who are in prison and the strangers who arrive, and in short he becomes the provider for all who are in want ”.

On broad lines this description corresponds with the order of worship registered in all the ancient liturgies and still observed in the Orthodox, Roman and Anglican Churches. We have the Scripture lessons followed by the sermon (the whole didactic part at the beginning and by itself), then the prayers and the Sacrament. The language of Justin enables us, moreover, to distinguish between the common prayers which precede the offering of the oblations and those of a different sort which follow, these last being further differentiated as petitions and thanksgivings. Among the thanksgivings was of course included *the* Thanksgiving which consecrated the elements and gave to the whole ceremony the name of Eucharist. For Justin speaks of the consecrated elements of bread and wine (“with water”) as “eucharisticized”. To say the *thanksgivinged* things would be no more startling or grammatically violent.

The only difference we need notice in this connection as between the liturgies of the east and of the west lies in the fact that the Roman Church, perhaps in the eighth century, dropped the *prosphesis* of the deacon and substituted for it a prayer by the priest.

If we can free ourselves from prejudice, we shall be obliged to acknowledge, it seems to me, that this is the only reasonable order of common worship. Besides having reason on its side it has the support of universal custom, uninterrupted until the Reformation. It seems as if those who have broken away from this tradition ought to be ready to show just cause why they should not return to it. Even if cause could be shown for the customary elimination of the Holy Communion from the most solemn assembly for common worship on the Lord's Day, it would still hold good that the prayers ought to *follow* the sermon.

But as a matter of fact this rule is observed in none of the English-speaking Churches. In this respect the Anglican Churches are as Protestant as any others. In fact they err more egregiously than others when Morning Prayer — the whole of it, if not also the Litany and the "Ante-Communion" — is treated as a preliminary to the sermon. It is this use of Morning Prayer which makes it seem to an outsider like "the minutes of the last meeting". Morning Prayer assumes the devotion of spirit which the sermon should inspire. From the traditional form of Anglican service it would be impossible to deduce any rule or principle of order in common worship. Not to speak of minutiae (and without considering whether the *people* at the moment when they enter the Church are likely to be in a disposition to confess their sins) the traditional Anglican service is as follows: a confession of sins, a collection of psalms, two lessons with canticles, a creed, many prayers (both of petition and thanksgiving), a litany, the Ten Commandments, two more lessons, another creed, and then the sermon. No other Church in Christendom has so confused and confounded the several parts of common worship. There is no climactic

arrangement, unless the sermon be the climax to which all the prayers lead up, and even upon this supposition there would be no intelligible sequence. Of this confusion we are proud. An "Episcopal" bishop published not long ago a chart which illustrates the many and violent changes of posture required of the *soul* as the Prayer Book plunges us into contrition, raises us to exultation, only to plunge us again into the mood of supplication and raise us again to thanksgiving, and so forth. This zigzag chart looks like the record of a barometer in a cyclone. Yet this bishop regarded it as a proof of the superiority of the Book of Common Prayer! Naturally enough the changes of bodily posture are as frequent as those required of the soul. I have reckoned that there may be forty changes of posture, as between sitting, kneeling, and standing, before we reach the Holy Communion proper. One cannot wonder at the Roman Catholic who thought the "Episcopal" service very nice but preferred the simpler ways of her own Church. All this confusion is very familiar to us, and many are proud of knowing when to stand, to sit, to kneel, while the outsider is clumsily at a loss what to do. To the adepts who are thoroughly initiated this has only the inconvenience that it obscures from them the primary principles of common worship; but to the outsider it is deterrent, and we cannot wonder that the "Episcopal" Church has little influence upon the masses.

It is commonly urged that union as between Protestant Churches, if at all it can be brought about, must result in a compromise which will in some measure embody the doctrine, cult, and organization peculiar to each denomination. Pretty much every one is agreed as to the necessity of some measure of compromise in respect

to the *forms* of Church organization. The propriety of compromise about the truth is not so evident, and if compromise on the question of cult means that we should all pool our errors, the prospect is not enticing. Yet I do not see what else a compromise in this field could mean. We are in fact already united in a common and fundamental error when we put the cart before the horse, the prayer before the sermon. This results in two perfectly opposite effects. In the greater number of Protestant denominations it unduly exalts the importance of the sermon as an element of common worship. In the Anglican communion, on the other hand, it unduly disparages it, for the reason that "glorified Morning Prayer" makes a sermon following seem superfluous and leaves the congregation impatient for it to be over.

This is somebody's fault, but it is not a fault of the Book of Common Prayer. That book gives no countenance to our error. It provides for the sermon only in the place where it ought properly to come, immediately after the Gospel (and Creed) in the Liturgy, with no prayers preceeding it except the collect for the day and such as originally were the private prayers of the priest. The sermon was not contemplated in connection with Morning or Evening Prayer, nor was Morning Prayer expected to usurp the place of the Holy Communion or be used as an introduction to it. Even as the book now stands we are free to put the sermon *before* Morning or Evening Prayer. I have often taken advantage of this liberty, and I am sure that the effect of the change was good, in spite of its unfamiliarity. Very many Anglicans are keenly sensible of our error and find a way of avoiding it by suppressing Morning Prayer altogether. The "Episcopal" Church has lately provided by legislation a way of escape,

permitting such an abbreviation of Morning Prayer when it is used as an introduction to the Holy Communion that nothing is left of it except the Lord's Prayer, three Psalms, an Old Testament Lesson, and a New Testament psalm, followed immediately by the Gospel, the Epistle and the sermon. Perhaps unintentionally, this legislation has the effect of restoring to the Liturgy the lesson from the "Prophets" which Justin Martyr refers to. For those persons, however, who will not remain for the Communion this new order of worship may seem to be disadvantageous inasmuch as it provides for them no prayers at all. But it ought to be considered whether persons who do not feel that they can communicate in the Sacrament are in any condition to communicate in the prayers, and whether before they are dismissed from the Church it might not be convenient for the congregation to make a prayer in their behalf, as was done by the early Church in behalf of catechumens and of penitents not yet absolved.

This consideration suggests at all events that in addition to the theoretical reasons for such an order of worship there is the very practical one that it provides properly for the needs of the uninitiated and of penitent sinners, who can be welcomed to the didactic part of the common worship in which they are able to communicate, without putting them to the pain of pretending to communicate in the prayers and the Sacrament. It provides, that is to say, as the early Church did, for the missionary activity of the Church as well as for the satisfaction of the faithful. In the first part of the programme the Church may be thought of as in the process of becoming, while in the second it is evidently a Church in being. In our present way of ordering things we have so

confused these two aspects and functions of the Church that nobody is satisfied: outsiders have to put up with much which is inappropriate for them, and the faithful rarely find themselves alone together. I have just been pleading that special seats ought to be set apart for the outsiders and for the penitent sinners. This would be quite in vain so long as we make no place in the Liturgy for persons of this sort. If adequate arrangements were made for their comfort, I am confident that they would come.

We effectually keep sinners away by the assumption that all persons who go to Church claim to be righteous. Sometimes it is regarded as a discourtesy on the part of the preacher if he speaks as if he were addressing sinners. A friend of mine beginning his ministry in a new parish was warned by a kindly lady that he was making a mistake in preaching to the people of St. James' Church as though they were sinners. "Are there no sinners among them, madam", said the puzzled pastor. "At least not among the pew-holders", was the firm reply. That assumption puts the honest sinner in a very uncomfortable position, especially if he is a pew-holder. It is impossible to reckon how many Christian sinners (not to speak of outsiders) are kept away from Church for no other reason than this. "And a good thing too", says the puritan. I know of a presbyter (afterwards a bishop) who thought he said a fine thing when he reported that in the course of the year, while he had got no new members into the Church, he had succeeded in getting two bad ones out. Of old, however, the notion prevailed that it was the business of the Church to get bad people into it — make them good, and keep them good if it were possible, and restore them to goodness if they should

fall. Celsus, the keenest critic of the Church in the second century, was scandalized by this feature of Christianity. He recalls that the pagan mysteries which make expiation for sins invite people to their initiation in such terms as these: "Whosoever has clean hands and is wise of speech", or "Whosoever is pure from defilement, whose soul is conscious of no guilt, who has lived well and righteously, let him come". "But let us hear", says Celsus, "what sort of people these (Christians) invite: "Whosoever is a sinner or unintelligent or a fool, in short, whosoever has gone to the devil, him will the kingdom of God receive". Celsus does in fact put his finger upon one of the chief marks of Christianity. St. Augustine, in giving an account of his experiments in religion, remarks that the Platonists and others have many beautiful things to say, but in none of them did he find such words as these: "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden". After all, what were all these pagan cults and mysteries for but for the expiation of sin? Strange that they should invite only such persons as have small need of this or none at all! The fact is, paganism did not really believe in the forgiveness of sins. So Celsus says: "It must be clear to everybody, I should think, that those who are sinners by nature and training none can change, not even by punishment, — to say nothing of doing it by pity". In the whole Greek world, as Oscar Wilde justly remarks, the maxim passed uncontradicted, that the past cannot be changed. Jesus stood for the exact opposite of this dictum, and in this respect at least the early Church did not obscure his teaching. Yet to-day we have *in our midst* critics as hard as Celsus. They say that the Church has authority to *proclaim* the forgiveness of sins but cannot *forgive* sinners. Such men

cannot sympathize with the joyful acclaim of the Gospel, "Blessed be God who hath given such authority *unto men*" (Mt 9: 8).

There is small chance, however, of having your sinner forgiven so long as he continues to sit in the seat of the righteous. The first step is to lead him to the seat of the penitent. But again the faint hearted raise the doubt, Will he come? And again I express the conviction that once you provide a *place* for him he will be fain to take it without needing to be prodded by the verger. The family pew, I warrant you, has not seemed a bed of roses to *him*. And if but one penitent took that seat, how it would electrify the congregation! And if the seat were full, what an incentive to the preacher! Without being accused of indelicacy he could preach of sin to the confessed sinner — and thus touch everybody. "A touch of nature makes the whole world kin".

I composed once a serio-comic sermon ostensibly founded on the first verse of the first Psalm and arguing to the effect that inasmuch as "the seat of the scornful" was evidently an institution in Israel and there was in the Apostolic Church "the place of the idiot", we must not be less hospitable. The argument, I confess is fallacious, but the conclusion is sound. But I must revert to another condition for success, whether we have to deal with the "scornful" man (whom I take to be an inquirer) or to the penitent: *you must not require him to pray*. In the temples of Christian Science I have looked around and wondered why so many sensible people came and evidently enjoyed coming. I conclude that this is accounted for in part by the fact that not much is demanded of the people, and in particular that they are not required to pray. Some Scripture was read and a part

o the "Key to the Scripture", some hymns were sung, the sermon was not so interesting as in the average Church, and the Lord's Prayer was recited in a Pickwickian sense. That is to say, the inquirer was on the same footing with everybody else: there was no function performed in which he could not communicate. But in the Church it is different: there is only a small part of the worship in which an inquirer can properly share. Look around in any congregation and you will see a number of people sitting bolt upright at prayer time. These are the "scornful", — or the honester part of them. Others, weakly compliant, lean over, or even kneel down, in pretence that they are praying. Why subject them to this torment? An open minded inquirer comes into the Church to learn what it is all about. It is to be hoped, of course, that he who comes to scoff may remain to pray; but we must remember that he cannot pray so long as he is a scorner. He must first be "enlightened", about himself and about God, getting a vision of his own sin and of God's goodness. Incontinently we ask him to pray. The inference is that to approach God as closely as any Christian can approach him no instruction is needed, no change of life and heart, no confession of faith, in short, no initiation — and where no initiation is required it is not unreasonably assumed that there exist no mysteries. Small wonder that the scornful that come to scoff go away scoffing. The "incomparable Book of Common Prayer" subjects the scornful to the most excruciating test. It first of all obliges him to confess his sins (though he has no compunction), it absolves him (though he is not yet a Christian), it obliges him to profess a creed which he has not yet accepted, and it constrains him for a pretence to make long prayers. All this and much more before reaching

the sermon, which is what chiefly he came to hear. Some outsiders who come for the sake of hearing the sermon and do in fact enjoy it are patient enough to endure a half hour of preliminary matter, complaining only that "it takes so long to read the minutes of the last meeting". A few conscientious persons try in vain to find the places in the Prayer Book, and their sense of social propriety renders them ill at ease because they cannot prognosticate what is to be the next change of posture. Even the English Puritans of an early time, who knew the Church service perfectly, were wont to complain that it kept one continually bobbing up and down.

But enough has been said in favour of the inquirer and about that part of Christian worship in which he can properly communicate. I would return now to Justin Martyr's description of the public worship of the Christians and consider more particularly that part of it in which the faithful alone can communicate.

It is not strange that Justin, in the passage we were lately considering, has nothing to say about hymns, for the summary account he gives of the Christian assemblies was meant only to convince the Roman authorities that they were harmless gatherings. But Justin does mention "hymns and pomp of words" in another place (c. 13), and of course it is evident from the New Testament that hymns were an important constituent of Christian worship from the beginning. The disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper (Mk 14: 26), St. Paul makes it clear that "psalms and hymns and odes" (Ephes. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16) were a regularly recurrent feature of divine worship (1 Cor. 14: 26), and St. John in giving an account of the worship of the assembly in heaven employs many Christian "odes", which doubtless were familiar to him

in the worship of the Church on earth. And on earth too it is likely that the musical parts were distributed generally throughout the service, and that they were commonly rendered responsively by answering choirs, or by the people responding to the priest (*cf.* Rev. 4: 8 *seq.*; 5: 9 *seq.*). Pliny, writing early in the second century, singles out as worthy of special remark that the Christians "sing *responsively* a hymn to Christ as God". Such was the method of Hebrew psalmody, and it is natural that the Church followed it.

It is likely that Justin intended to include hymns under the expression "prayers and thanksgivings". For in fact Christian hymns (with few exceptions) are a musical form of prayer. Most of our thanksgiving and praise is expressed in this form. It is likely too that he found it difficult to assign a particular place for the hymns in his brief but exact account of the order of exercises, inasmuch as the hymns and the musical parts of the service were distributed throughout the whole. For this reason, too, the theory of Höfling fails to take account of them. Hymns are prayers, but it is not a tradition of the Church that they must be used only at one particular point of common worship which corresponds with their value as expressions of communion. If such were the theory, they must all of them be lumped together in one place, and that place must obviously be *after* the prayers of a more sober sort, for there can be no doubt that they are a more lively expression of communion than any other part of worship except the Sacrament.

I think we may discover the reason and justification for the use of hymns and musical responses throughout the service in the consideration that they are the expression of the people's part in common worship. The people's

part in worship must be prominent throughout. This consideration applies not only to hymns (in the narrow and technical sense) and to anthems (as we would now call them) and to Old Testament Psalms (which of course were sung), but also and more especially to the briefer musical responses made by the people or by the choir which represents the people. On this subject Höfling has something to say to *us*, who, though we are pretty generally in agreement about hymns, are thoroughly in disagreement about any other sort of musical response by the people. For example, at the Savoy Conference the Dissenters complained that the reading of alternate verses of the Psalms, and in general all the popular responses which the Prayer Book required, made a confused murmuring in the church. That was on the assumption that they must all be *said*, for the Puritans would not even consider the alternative that anything which was not written in modern metrical rhyme might be *sung*. Hence the people's audible part in public worship was restricted to the "Psalms of David" — in a metrical version. The Puritans were perfectly right about the confusion which results from popular responses made in a speaking voice, which permits of no control either with respect to time or tone. But hear what a Lutheran has to say.

"If the whole congregation is called upon to unite vocally in any part of divine service, it can be done only in the form of song, *i, e.*, in such wise that all the individual voices are united in the swing of the rhythm and melody, — if we are not disposed to defy the principle of "order and decency" which St. Paul emphasized in 1 Cor. 14: 40. A popular response in a speaking voice would result in the most disagreeable and unedifying mixture and confusion of tones. This is a consideration

to which we have hitherto given far to little attention in our discussions about Church music. Church music is a necessary part of the Christian cult because it would be in contradiction to the very nature of the Christian congregation to oblige the people to remain passive while the leader performs the whole cult in their stead. The congregation itself must make its voice directly heard in worship; it must assert itself and act liturgically as a whole by means of the spoken word. This, however, as we have said, can properly be accomplished only in the form of song. In this connection it must be understood that for such a speaking together in song not every thought content is appropriate. The congregation can feel itself prompted and compelled to united vocal expression only when there is a strong strain of feeling, a movement of sentiment, in short, a mood which is akin to poetry and song. Church hymns which have a purely didactic character, which carry no suggestion of lofty feeling, and make no strong appeal to sentiment with fresh and lively directness, are a thing of naught. The same considerations which apply to the independent self-expression of the congregation as a whole by means of the spoken word apply equally to the *co-operation* of the people with the leader (*Liturg*). As the congregation cannot answer otherwise than by song, it is plain that when a response is required it can be rendered only by singing. This furnishes us with a ready answer to the question whether the so-called collects and versicles should be sung. If the congregation is to respond with the Amen or with some other familiar formula (as, for example, the response to the greeting, "The Lord be with you"), the minister's part too must be sung. If the minister does not sing, the response of the people must be omitted, — which is undesirable because the cultus would thereby lose, still

more than it has already lost, the character of reciprocal fellowship ”.

It does not comport with the general purpose of this work to enter far into the discussion of such details as this Lutheran divine here brings to our attention. Church unity might be enjoyed even if men were to remain impervious to his stringent argument. We might agree to differ about such matters, — as we are compelled now to do in the “Episcopal” Church.

But it must, I think, be clear from the foregoing discussion about common worship that what is required for reunion is neither a compromise which compounds our various customs, nor an abject surrender to the claims of any one denomination. It is a question of finding and following the right way. The most effective contribution which any group can now make to the edification of the Church of God is by ordering its own ways aright. It is my conviction that we are all of us greatly at fault and that the forms of our common worship are an obstacle to common prayer. In order that we may be able to pray together when we are in other respects united it is only necessary that the forms of worship in every Church be so reasonably ordered that they encourage prayer. It is not necessary that either the form or the substance of the prayers be in every Church the same. Variety within certain limits is desirable, and sufficient uniformity will be insured if men are everywhere mindful of the ancient treasures of devotion, if they use the Old Testament Psalms and colour their language from the Scripture, if they neglect not withal the psalms of the Church (*Gloria in excelsis, Te Deum, etc.*), select worthy Christian hymns, and in the more exalted parts of prayer prize those formulas which have been consecrated by ancient and universal use.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Much that might properly be said about the Holy Communion has been said already in the last chapter in connection with the theme of common prayer. It would be reasonable enough to comprise all the matter of this present chapter under that general heading, if only we were all agreed that the Holy Communion ought to be regarded as a constantly recurrent constituent of common worship.

Our disagreement upon that question constitutes a prime point of distinction as between Catholic and Protestant Churches (the Lutheran Churches alone excepted). The former do and the latter do not regard the Holy Communion as a regular constituent of common worship. Protestants of the Calvinistic or Reformed branch are hardly inclined to regard it as a part of worship at all, because they emphasize exclusively the *reception* of the Sacrament. At all events, in none of the Reformed Churches is the Holy Communion a frequently recurrent act. Very few celebrate the Lord's Supper so often as once a month, the greater part celebrate it quarterly, according to the custom established in Geneva, while many Churches are content to observe it once a year.

The purpose of the Reformers in rendering infrequent the observance of the Lord's Supper was to restore again the *social* conception of the Sacrament, the sense that it was not a lonely or individualistic communion with God in Christ but a communion (fellowship) of Christians with one another (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17). We ought to feel some sympathy with this aim, for it is not only Evangelical but Catholic. We do ill to forget that till the end of the fourth century it was the universal practice for *all* to communicate whenever the Holy Communion was celebrated, which was at least on every Lord's Day. The lax custom which has ever since prevailed was at the beginning denounced by the great leaders of the Church and by the Councils. St. Chrysostom is exceedingly fierce in denouncing it as apostacy. Calvin shows the same feeling when he says: "For when the majority abstain from communion the Church is as it were dissolved" (1). The question for the Reformers was, how *often* the whole Church could be brought together in this act of communion. It must be remembered that the habit of not communicating every Sunday was no invention of the Reformation: it was a bad heritage carried over from the late Catholic tradition both of the Eastern and of the Western Church. Calvinists, Lutherans, and Anglicans had to deal with this bad habit as best they could, and no solution of the problem can be wholly satisfactory so long as Christians will not return to the Primitive and early Catholic practice.

Against too long and interval Calvin himself indignantly protested. He says in the *Institutes* (2): "Clearly this cus-

(1) *Resp. de quibusd. eccl. rit. p. 206: Nam dum major pars a communione abstinet, quodammodo dissipatur ecclesia.*

(2) IV, 17, 46.

tom which bids us communicate but once a year is most certainly an invention of the devil, by whosoever agency it was introduced". And in the context of the passage which I have cited above he says: "It would please us best to celebrate the Supper once a month, if too great frequency would not lead to negligence. For when the majority abstains from communion the Church is as it were dissolved. Nevertheless we should prefer to invite the Church monthly, rather than only four times a year as is the custom with us. When I first came here (to Geneva) it was distributed only three times a year, and in fact there were seven whole months intervening between the Supper of Pentecost and that of Christmas. I preferred a monthly celebration, but when I could not effect this by persuasion it seemed to me better to overlook the infirmity of the people rather than to contend pertinaciously. I have taken pains, however, to set it down in a public document that this custom of ours is vicious, in order that by posterity it may be the more easily and freely corrected".

The Calvinistic "posterity" has not sought to correct this abuse, except in so far as the Anglican Churches have followed Calvin's preference by adhering to the tradition of "Communion Sunday" once a month.

For the most part the Anglican Church, like the Lutheran, has preferred to take another path, retaining the Holy Communion as a regular part of the worship of the Lord's Day and of other festivals, but without the hope or even the clear intention of making it an expression of the fellowship of the whole Church. The result is that it is often viewed as an appendix to common worship, the private act of a few of the more devout.

It is hardly profitable to debate which of these two

ways is the least undesirable. On the other hand it is very clear that the Roman Church, by its constant and concordant practice with regard to the Holy Communion and by the Eucharistic Congresses which it has recently invented to exalt its own practice, thoroughly "puts it over" the Protestant Churches of every name. It seems to me that this slang phrase is in place to denote the dilemma of Protestantism. For though we may hold that "the sacraments were not ordained *by Christ* to be gazed upon or carried about", and though we may dissent from the Catholic doctrine of the Mass, we cannot forever disguise from ourselves the fact that the Roman Church has maintained the Lord's Supper in a position of singular honour, and that we have not; that it has had due regard to the frequency of its observance, in accordance with the custom of the earliest time when "the breaking of bread" was a daily act, and that it has ever treated it as the chief act of common worship, as it seems to have been treated in the earliest days (Acts 2: 42) and as it certainly was in the first age about which we have abundant information. The Roman Church, moreover, has a clear advantage over Protestantism in the fact that it can give a reason for "going to Church". Neither the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, nor the consideration that one ought to hear sermons, or that one ought to worship, is logically convincing as a reason for attending Church on every Lord's Day. Of late it has become manifest that these reasons are not practically persuasive. But the Roman Church has a clear justification for insisting upon the "Dominical precept", *i. e.* that every Christian must attend Mass once a Sunday, for demonstrably the Eucharist has ever been celebrated on the Lord's Day, and on that day Christians have always been expected *at least* to "assist".

In these respects the Roman Church and the Orthodox can claim to be more evangelical than the "Evangelicals". Yet none have much to boast about when they remember the early Catholic practice. If the Scottish Covenanters communicate but once a year, so do the great majority of Roman Catholics and all the orthodox who are not priests. And no one will think of ascribing to the guile of priestcraft this defection, which grew and extended in the Church until it has become a universal corruption.

From a very early time there appears to have been a difference of custom as between Rome on the one hand and the East and Egypt on the other. St. Augustine says (*Epist.* 118): "Some communicate daily in the Body and Blood of the Lord, others only on certain days, in other places the offering is omitted on no day, in others it is made only on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, in other places on the Lord's Day alone". St. Basil represents the custom of the East when he says (*Epist.* 289): "We communicate on the fourth day (Wednesday) of every week: on the Lord's Day, on the fourth day, on the preparation (Friday), and on other days if there be a memorial of any martyr". Socrates (*Hist.* V. 22) reports it as a peculiarity of Alexandria that on Wednesdays and Fridays it was customary to have the Scripture lessons and the sermon "without the celebration of the mysteries". For this custom (which presumably was the only instance in the early Church of a single weekly celebration) Tertullian in condemning it gives an explanation (*De Orat.* 14): "Likewise on the station days (Wednesday and Friday) some do not think that the sacrifice should accompany the prayers, for the reason that the station (fast) would be broken by receiving the Body of the Lord. Ought a pious observance to nullify the Eucharist, or can such a

thing be more binding before God? Would not your *station* be more solemn if you *stood* at the altar?" It seems on the other hand to have been a peculiarity of Rome to communicate every day. For St. Jerome, who knew both the East and the West, remarks (*Epist. ad Pammach. 4*): "I know that in Rome it is customary for the faithful to communicate *always* in the Body of Christ". About such differences of custom there was place for no bitterness. So Jerome says of the Roman custom, "I neither condemn nor approve: each has reasons on his side".

But just at this time the grave defection was beginning which was to level all distinctions. Augustine may have been speaking of the custom long established in the East when he says (*De Serm. Dom. in Monte II, 7*): "Many in the Orient do not daily communicate in the Lord's Supper, though it is called 'daily bread'!" But Ambrose (*De Sacr. V. 4*) is evidently condemning a corruption when, commenting like Augustine on the Lord's Prayer, he says: "If it is 'daily bread', why do you eat it after a year, as the Greeks in the Orient are accustomed to do?" And Chrysostom by his complaints and rebukes only too thoroughly substantiates this criticism. "In vain the daily sacrifice! in vain do we stand before the altar! and no one communicates!" (*Hom. 3 in Ephes.*). And (*Hom. 17 in Hebr.*), "Many partake of this sacrifice once in the entire year, others twice, others frequently". It was in vain that St. Chrysostom sought by his eloquence to stem this defection, in vain that ecumenical councils condemned it (1).

(1) The tenth of the so-called Apostolic Canons reads: "All the faithful who, entering the Holy Church of God and listening to

Note that the custom which St. Chrysostom condemned was that of non-communicating attendance at the Sacrifice. He counted this a shameful contempt of God's grace. In condemnation of it he has strong arguments to urge. "If you are worthy of the Sacrifice, why not receive the Sacrament? If you are not worthy of this, neither are you worthy to join in the prayers. You hear the herald standing and saying (he means the deacon's warning): 'As many as are under penance depart!' All as many as do not communicate are under penance. — On whose account does he say, 'Depart, as many as are unable to pray'? But you remain, contumaciously (for he who does not receive the Mysteries shamelessly and contumaciously remains). Tell me, if one is invited to a dinner, has washed his hands and reclined and is all prepared at the table, and then does not partake, does he not show insolence to his host? Would it not have been better for such an one not to come? This is your case: you are present, you have sung the hymn with all, you have confessed that you are worthy not to be reckoned among the unworthy; how is it that you remain and do not partake of the Table? You say, I am unworthy. Are you not therefore unworthy of that communion which is experienced in the prayers?" (*Hom. III. in Ephes.*).

I could quote from St. Chrysostom many like protests. But before long the time for protest was passed. In the West there was never time for it, — so rapidly was the

the Holy Scriptures, do not remain for the Holy Communion are to be excommunicated". The second canon of the Council of Antioch is expressed in almost the same words. And it is to be remembered that in the view of the early Catholic Church the disciplinary canons were accounted no less infallible than the doctrinal.

Eastern abuse adopted. The Council of Arles made it the duty of non-communicating attendants to remain until the benediction. By other councils it was forbidden to all who did not communicate to contribute their gifts. But before long the duty of offering gifts was enjoined upon *all* on every Sunday, while it was agreed that Christians need communicate only three times a year, on the great festivals; and finally an Easter communion was all that the Church felt justified in exacting.

Doubtless one reason for this general defection from the early custom was the fact that the political triumph of Christianity brought into the Church many who were not of it. It may be that the early Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist as a true propitiatory Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ had gradually an effect in altering the custom of communicating regularly. It obviously facilitated the change, for it tended to make the Sacrifice more important than the Sacrament, till it became in fact the climax of Christian worship. One may raise the question whether a materialistic idea of the Sacrament did not deter many from partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ.

But however "the great refusal" came about, it became in the end universal, and it was lasting. If fellowship in human error could unite us, we should all feel united by this common fault. We are all tarred with the same stick.

The Church leaders of the fifth and sixth centuries were faced by this dilemma: either non-communicating attendance, or non-communicating non-attendance. Unanimously they chose the former as the lesser evil. I do not see how now we can well choose differently. If we cannot agree that the Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice of

the Body and Blood of Christ (and it seems to me that we cannot), there are prominent in the Liturgy other elements of sacrifice which we cannot ignore. In *these* we can communicate, and in the prayers, if an inveterate prejudice hinders us from communicating frequently in the Sacrament.

The action of the Lord's Supper includes a striking memorial of the Lord's sacrificial death. In that we may rightly find a deep ground of communion with one another even when we do not partake of the Sacrament. I know nothing else that could serve so well to fix attention upon the deep things of our faith and make them central in all our religious thinking and feeling. Both the Incarnation and the Redemptive Death of our Lord are here set forth in the uniting terms of faith and not in the divisive definitions of theology. It can hardly be doubted that, if the Lord's Supper had retained in the Protestant Churches the place it has always had in the Catholic tradition, we would not have suffered so much from false emphasis in theology, from insistence upon matters in which Christians can hardly be got to agree, or from the divisions which have been occasioned by such inevitable differences. Neither can it be doubted, I think, that the more recent tendency to discard the essential doctrines of Christianity along with the distinguishing dogmas of the sects would hardly have made so much headway *within* the Church, if the Eucharist had remained the central and constant element of common worship. The Lord's Supper is a balance wheel. The minister who has no belief in the Incarnation and the Atonement would in the end find it intolerably irksome to celebrate constantly this ordinance according to any form which does justice to its original intention.

I suppose that St. Cyprian (in the third century) was

the first Church leader who expressly regarded the Body and Blood of Christ as the sacrifice which was offered in the Eucharist. But the sacrificial idea in one form or another was prominent from the beginning. The Apostles of Jesus must have apprehended that he presented to them his Body as a sacrificial meal, or they could have found no sense at all in his words. Accordingly St. Paul compares the Lord's Supper with pagan sacrificial meals even when he contrasts the two things. From this point of view the Sacrifice was Christ himself, once offered. Not the Sacrifice but the meal was to be repeated, "to show forth his death till he come". But very early, very naturally, and by the Apostles themselves, all the sacrificial terms and ideas which the Church had at its command were brought into relation with this rite. Prayer itself is a sacrificial element, so also and even more plainly are the bread and wine, as well as the gifts in kind or in coin which are made on this occasion. So it is not strange that by the beginning of the second century (if the *Didache* be not of the first) the Eucharist was universally spoken of as the sacrifice of the Church. If we were not afraid of "the entering wedge", we should have no disposition to deny or to disregard these facts. We need not admit that the Mass is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, but that it contains many sacrificial elements we cannot deny without putting ourselves in opposition to the early and to the earliest Church.

I have sought to make it plain that it is not desirable for the priest to communicate alone, and it seems to me intolerable that in any meeting for *common worship* the people should not be invited to communicate. The first abuse grew up, as I have said, in the fifth century, in spite of the utmost efforts of the priests. The second

is a much later abuse. Nevertheless, Luther's dislike of the *Winkelmesse*, like the English rubric which prohibits the celebration of the Eucharist when there are less than three to communicate, ignores the precedent set by St. Paul (Acts 27: 35). For it seems to me indubitable that what St. Paul did alone, in the presence of fellow-Christians and outsiders, was to celebrate the Eucharist and partake of the Sacrament as a personal act of faith. To "break bread" is an expression which occurs nowhere in the whole field of early Christian literature except with reference to the Eucharist, and in this case the solemn blessing of the bread (thanksgiving) "in the presence of them all" makes the matter more abundantly clear. The breaking of the bread for the feeding of the multitude is not an exception, if St. John (6: 11, 50-58) has any good reason for regarding this feast in the desert as the first Eucharist, as the whole Church did subsequently regard it in its earliest art. The breaking of bread was a gesture so characteristic of Jesus that this act sufficed to discover to the disciples at Emmaus the presence of the Lord (Lk. 24: 30, 31).

It may not be possible now to persuade all people to agree about this matter. But at least it ought not to be possible for persons of superior piety to leave the Church at the moment that the priest utters the invitation: "Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, draw near with faith". If you cannot draw so near as the Sacrament, come as near as you can.

Nevertheless, every argument employed by St. Chrysostom remains true. The people must be persuaded of the duty and the privilege of frequent communions. Augustine

says: "The daily reception of the Eucharist I neither praise nor blame. However, I persuade and exhort to communion on every Lord's Day, if only the mind be without the desire to sin" (*De Eccl. Dorm. liii*). "Moreover, if a man's sins are not so great that he be adjudged worthy of excommunication, he should not deprive himself of the daily medicine of the Lord's Body". Chrysostom urges that if a man can communicate at all, he can communicate frequently; that if he cannot rightly communicate on every Lord's Day, neither can he on the great feasts. "It is not a daring thing to come frequently, but to come unworthily is daring, even if be but once. Let the time to approach be indicated to you by a clean conscience". Though we may not, with St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and others, conceive that the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer expressly refers to the Eucharist, we must admit that it is aptly applied. "Daily receive", says Ambrose (*De Sacr. V. 4*), "what you daily need. So live that you may be worthy daily to receive. He who is not worthy to receive daily will not be worthy at the end of the year to receive".

But though we urge men to receive the Sacrament, we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that many who profess and call themselves Christians, — who may also be the most ready to come, — are not worthy to receive. It is not the repentant sinner who is an unwelcome guest at the Lord's Table, but such as will not repent, still cherishing the "desire to sin". As there is no longer any discipline in the Church to repel men, they must judge themselves (as some of them doubtless do too harshly), and so long as they count themselves unworthy to communicate in the Sacrament they must reckon themselves excommunicate and unworthy to communicate

in the prayers. For such persons, as they leave the Church, the congregation should be asked to pray.

The restoration of the Eucharist to its proper place in common worship ought to have been the first and the constant effort of the Anglo-Catholic Revival. The case in favour of it is so strong that success could hardly have failed to reward the zealous efforts of the strong party which has developed out of this movement. This is of course one of the ideals of the "High Church" party. But it has not been pursued with a clear perception of what is possible and of what in the end is desirable. The Anglican Catholics were too easily contented when they had secured the celebration of the Sacrament on every Lord's Day, though it was for a small company and at an unusual hour. It cannot be said that they have expended every effort to make it the chief feature of *common* worship for all Christians of their persuasion; and they have not even desired to make in the fullest sense an act of communion at the hour when most Christians are accustomed to come together. What a success must the Ritualists have achieved had they devoted to this end the energy which they expended upon the laudable but less necessary aim of restoring the proper ecclesiastical vestments! But from following this greater ideal of making the Eucharist an expression of social fellowship High Churchmen have been impeded by a singular embarrassment, namely, by an undue emphasis upon the ancient rule that the Sacrament must be received "fasting". This rule is venerable because it is old. It ought therefore to be observed so far as it does not conflict with weightier considerations. But the argument of antiquity is the only solid defence that can be offered for this custom. All other arguments end in gross absurdities. And it is not

countenanced by the *most* ancient practice. For though it is undoubtedly true that the disciples in coming together to break bread came *fasting*, this is true only in the sense that we come fasting to every meal. It was a matter of course. And so long as the Eucharist was a part of the daily meal we may presume that, after the example of the Lord's Supper, it was the *concluding* part, after men had already eaten. And when it came to be in a measure separated from the common meal there was so little scruple about fasting that St. Paul, to obviate a deplorable disorder, admonished the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11: 13) to "eat at home" before coming to partake of the Sacrament, "if any man is hungry". Yet the custom of fasting before communion grew up naturally and inevitably when the Eucharist was separated from the love feast or *agape*. The 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (verses 7-11) suggests how this evolution came about. It appears from this account that it was the custom of the disciples to gather together on the first day of the week to break bread and that this meeting took place in the *evening*. We must remember that according to Jewish and early Christian reckoning the day *began* with the evening at sunset. The evening of the Lord's Day would therefore be what we call Saturday night. On this particular occasion the meeting lasted till after midnight, and some time before the break of day the Sacrament was celebrated. There is no good reason to suppose that this was altogether exceptional. The Church has always retained the custom of the vigil before the greater feasts, and this is clearly an archaic survival. Moreover, it is obvious that so long as Sunday was a working day the Christians must have been obliged to hold all their greater assemblies by night — the night before

Sunday as we should call it. This explains how "the Lord's Supper became an early breakfast", as malicious dissenters have put it. It was in the early hours of the morning, "before light", according to Pliny, that the Christians at the beginning of the second century were "accustomed to meet together and to sing responsively a hymn to Christ as God, and bind themselves with a *sacramentum* (the soldier's oath) not to do anything dishonest" *etc.* I cannot interpret this in any way but as referring to the Eucharistic assembly. A meeting which Pliny says was held later in the day "for partaking food, which, however, was of a common sort and harmless", cannot refer to anything but the *agape*, inasmuch as the Christians were willing to desist from this practice when the proconsular edict forbade it. It is certain that by the third century the early Eucharist was universal, and St. Cyprian justifies it in these words: "Since it was not in the morning but after supper that the Lord offered the mixed chalice, ought we not to celebrate on the Lord's Day after supper? . . . It behooved Christ to offer in the evening that the hour of this sacrifice might indicate the setting (of the sun) and the evening of the (old) world. But we celebrate early in the morning the *resurrection* of the Lord". (*Epist.* 63). Whether or no the Gospel tradition ("Early while it was yet dark", Jn 20: 1; "Very early on the first day of the week when the sun was risen", Mk 16: 2) furnished the chief motive for fixing the early hour for the Eucharist, it clearly furnished a symbolical justification of the custom, and it is not easy to understand how any sect of Christians can scoff at it. It was a matter of course that at such an hour the faithful came to the communion "fasting", *i. e.* having eaten nothing since the preceding day. After the peace of the

Church the Eucharistic assembly was postponed to a more convenient hour in the morning, and still it was no hardship to come to this service fasting, for the people about the Mediterranean, then as now, were not accustomed to eat before noon. Before Christianity was carried to the northern peoples, who require a breakfast early in the day, the custom of communicating at the chief assembly on Sundays had already fallen into disuse. If fasting before communion must be exacted of Germans, Englishmen and Americans, it is quite vain to expect that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper can ever become for them the culmination of the *common* worship on every Lord's Day. It seems incredible that anyone can deliberately weigh the relative importance of these two conflicting traditions and decide in favour of fasting and *against* the restoration of the Holy Communion to the place it originally held in the common worship of the Church.

This to my mind is a question upon which there is no room for compromise, nor yet any hope that all can be brought to agreement. It is the duty of every priest when he can, and of all the people when they are well informed, to restore the Eucharist to its proper place in common worship. But a difference of custom in this respect, due to invincible ignorance, need not be accounted an obstacle to reunion, as it is not an absolute hindrance to unity now within the Anglican communion. Yet it is evident that conformity in this matter would be the strongest bond of unity and the clearest expression of fellowship.

A reform looking towards the restoration of the Eucharist to its proper place in common worship is already under way in the Anglican communion, where the Liturgy as established by law, though "admirable", is not likely,

however, to be universally imitated. It is not impossible that other Churches more distinctively Protestant may revert with still greater interest to a custom which is so clearly evangelical. They are in a way better off, for they are free to establish what order they see fit. It is highly important therefore to consider what is *necessary* for the due celebration of the Holy Communion, so that we may be able without scruple to communicate together (1), and also what form is likely to be most generally acceptable.

All will agree that there is no act essential to the consecration of the bread and wine except the prayer; but about the form of the prayer we are not agreed. We are not even in a fair way to come to an understanding of what the earliest Church meant by the "blessing" of the bread. It is a marvel to many that the *Didache* prescribes no prayer but a thanksgiving couched in the form of the ordinary thanksgiving at meals. For this reason they are inclined to discredit this ancient document. It is like the lost wanderer who tears his compass to pieces because it does not point in the direction he believes is right. This sign-post *does* point us in the right direction. It points to the blessing at meals as the origin of the Eucharistic prayer. It points in vain, however, so long as we have no clear conception what the blessing at meals properly is. It has now, unfortunately, fallen generally into disuse, and perhaps it is useless to talk about restoring the great Eucharist to its proper place till we have restored the simple and gracious practice of the little eucharist. But before this practice fell into disuse

(1) Assuming the competence of the minister, which is a question for the next chapter.

it was obscured by a misunderstanding, and this must be cleared up before the grace can be restored to use.

Some years ago I criticized (but only in the ears of the authours) *The Presbyterian Book of Common Worship* for the fact that, with the laudable intention of restoring an ancient usage, they had appended to the public prayers six forms for the grace at meals — not one of which contained a word of thanksgiving. Now the “Episcopal” Church is about to set forth two model forms of “grace”, the one begging that God will “bless this food”, the other that he will “give us grateful hearts”. Again not a word of thanksgiving. How can the lay folk be expected to say “grace before meat” if the clergy, and even a commission of learned liturgists, do not know enough to explain to them that “grace” comes from a Latin word which means simply thanksgiving and that “blessing”, according to a Hebrew idiom, means precisely the same thing?

No record is preserved of the phrase which Jesus used when on many an occasion he ate with his disciples and “blessed the bread”; and yet we can be all but certain that he said, Blessed be thou, Father, who givest us day by day our daily bread. This allows for the peculiarity of Jesus’ phrase while it conforms to the common Jewish blessing which the Talmud records and the Bible itself suggests. The custom of the blessing at meals we can trace back to the time of Samuel, when it was perhaps exclusively the accompaniment of the sacrificial meal. In 1 Sam. 9: 15 it is said that the people were waiting to eat till the Prophet had “blessed” the sacrifice, that is to say, the food prepared from the sacrifice (1).

(1) In ancient Israel every common meal where flesh was eaten was a sacrificial meal, for no animal was slaughtered except in sacrifice. This indeed was also the pagan custom in New Testament times (1 Cor. 10: 28); and it survives in many places to this day.

In Hebrew the term "to bless" is equivocal: it was used as we use it, to call down God's blessing upon a person; but it was used also idiomatically in the sense of thanksgiving. The invariable formula for thanksgiving was "Blessed be God": hence the idiomatic phrase "to bless God", *e. g.* Ps. 66: 20; 68: 35; 1 Chron. 29: 10, 20; 2 Cor. 1: 3. "Blessing" was therefore perfectly equivalent to thanksgiving; and hence it is that in the various accounts of the breaking of the bread in the wilderness and at the Last Supper these two expressions are used interchangeably. The one was the Jewish idiom, the other was the Greek (1).

The most singular thing about this usage is that the Thanksgiving to God was regarded as a way, and as the only effective way, of blessing or consecrating the gifts which man receives from God. So St. Paul says (1 Cor. 10: 16), "the cup of blessing which we *bless*, is it not a fellowship in the Body of Christ?" So St. Mark (8: 7) says of the fishes that Jesus "blessed *them*", although in form he did nothing but bless God *for* them. St. John

(1) In the first account of the feast in the wilderness Mt 14: 36; Mk 6: 41; and Lk 9: 16 use the word "blessed" while in the second account Mt 15: 36 and Mk 8: 6 (*cf.* Jn 6: 11) have the expression "gave thanks". In the account of the Last Supper Mt 26: 26, 27 and Mk 14: 32, 33 agree in saying with respect to the bread that Jesus "blessed" and with respect to the cup that he "gave thanks". Luke (22: 17, 19, 20), like St. Paul (1 Cor. 11: 24), uses for both the bread and the cup the expression, "he gave thanks". Luke and John and Paul (and in part Matthew and Mark) were interpreting the Jewish phrase to Gentile Christians. Yet St. Paul (Cor. 10: 16) speaks of "the cup of blessing which we *bless*", which is a most flagrant Hebrew idiom.

uses in the same way the verb "to give thanks". It seems an intolerable solecism to us when (6: 33) he speaks of "the thanksgivingized bread", as does Justin Martyr in a passage which we have already considered ("the thanksgivinged — or Eucharistacized — elements"). The explanation of so strange a usage is given us by St. Paul. In 1 Tim. 4: 3-5 he speaks of meats (even such as were accounted ceremonially unclean, or which may have been sacrificed to idols) as being "sanctified by the word of God and by prayer", *i. e.* by the prayer of thanksgiving before the meal (1).

This peculiarity of Hebrew and early Christian thought justifies the consecration prayers of the *Didache*. Nothing is necessary to the consecration of the Holy Communion but the prayer of thanksgiving, — not the lessons, the creed, the sermon, the hymns, the confession (all this as a matter of course), but not even the supplications and intercessions, not the *epiclesis* (*i. e.* the invocation of the Holy Spirit), not the Lord's Prayer and not even the "words of institution". The Lord's Supper was called *the* Eucharist, not because thanksgiving was a principal part of the rite, but because it was the essential part. The Sacrament was bread and wine "eucharistacized", or, more simply still, it was itself the Eucharist, the thanksgiving.

These propositions are not lightly made, and they are not to be lightly accepted. But neither can the proof of them here given be lightly rejected. And if they are accepted, they will solve many a question which now keeps Christians apart.

If the Orthodox Churches should accept the proposition

(1) Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 30.

that thanksgiving to God suffices for the consecration of the common meal not only but also of the Eucharistic food, they would no longer insist upon the *epiklesis* as essential to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though they might still find reason to retain it for themselves and to think it good for others.

Again, if this proposition be true, the so-called Chicago-Lambeth platform of reunion demanded too much when it insisted upon "the unfailing use of the words of institution". Behind this requirement looms the late Roman superstition that the consecration of the bread and wine is effected by the recitation of the words, "This is my Body; This is my Blood". But in the Roman Mass these words are recited in the course of a prayer of thanksgiving. If they have such an effect as is ascribed to them, is it a matter of indifference whether they are recited as a prayer, or as a declaration, or as a Scripture lesson? The Chicago-Lambeth declaration demands too little when it requires this *alone* for the due celebration of the Lord's Supper and does not define in what way the words of institution are to be unfailingly used. It is a peculiarity of the Reformed Churches that they read as a Scripture lesson the words of institution as they are recorded by St. Paul in the 11th chapter of First Corinthians. This custom comes from Geneva and is singular in Christendom. It was characteristic of Protestantism in general and of the Reformed Church in particular that at every recurrence of public worship the people were instructed about the nature of the act they were performing, and without doubt this chapter was preferred to the Gospel narratives because it contained such terrible admonitions. This was of a piece with that "barring of the table" which was so fearsome an element in the annual

communion of the Scottish Kirk. But at least the Reformed Churches never went so far as to regard this as an act of consecration. It was left to the bishops at Lambeth to suggest this ineptitude.

On the other hand, it is true that a remembrance of Christ's death and sacrifice and of his words and acts at the Last Supper is contained in all the Catholic liturgies and can be shown to have been the practice of the Church since the middle of the second century. This indeed is so natural a thing that, were it not for our acquaintance with the simple thanksgivings of the *Didache*, we should be confident that such was the practice from the beginning, — that these memorials were invariably expressed in words as well as implied in the action. But in the liturgies this remembrance (*anamnesis*) was not expressed scrupulously in the words of Holy Scripture, for it was evidently not regarded as a recitation of authoritative words of institution, it was not valued as a part of a Scripture lesson, but it was part of a prayer. The custom of the Reformed Churches is very different, yet it brings them measurably near to the Orthodox, Roman, and Anglican custom. To conform perfectly they have only to use the words of institution as a prayer, — that is to say, incorporate them in the great Thanksgiving.

It is not strange therefore that earnest Christian men searching after a basis for reunion should believe they had discovered the line of least resistance in "the unfailing use of the words of institution". It was my assertion above that the recitation of the words of institution is not essential to the Sacrament. But really we are none of us now seeking, nor ought we to seek, as a basis for reunion the bare essentials of faith and order. In many directions the greatest common divisor of our several

faiths and observances exceeds the necessary minimum. As a united Church we would not desire to hold and express anything less than we now have in common in spite of our divisions. We may properly desire much more, and also expect it. For it is only the expectation of a fuller and more abundant Church life that can give impetus and inspiration to the movement towards reunion. If it can be plausibly proved that a very short prayer of Thanksgiving, without express reference to the death of Christ and the institution of the Supper, was adequate for the time when the Eucharist was the conclusion of the common meal or of the *agape*, this is not to say that anyone would feel it to be adequate in the very different situation which was created when the Eucharist was separated from the meal and became the central act not only of common but of public worship. We are in fact more nearly in agreement than we commonly suppose as to what is requisite for the due celebration of the Lord's Supper. For all Christians who agree that it ought to be celebrated at all require that it be solemnly celebrated and expect that it shall be accompanied by the various parts of common worship which, while they are not essential to it, are by no means extraneous or incongruous. The Lord's Supper has a tendency — in modern times as in ancient — to attract to itself all the congruous elements of prayer and praise. From the earliest times of which we have clear record it was accompanied by Scripture lessons and a sermon. It has at all times been counted the most apt occasion for the practical expression of Christian fellowship by the offering of our worldly substance. The approach to the Eucharist prompts us not only to supplication for personal pardon and cleansing but to every sort of supplication, for the edification of

the whole Church, for its ministry and its members everywhere, for the peace of the whole world, for the good government of our country, for fruitful seasons, and for all who are in any kind of distress. The further entrance into it raises the heart to a high pitch of praise to God the Creator of all, and this passes naturally into the loftiest note of thanksgiving for all the inestimable benefits which we have received in Christ Jesus, which is the Thanksgiving or Eucharist *par excellence*. This, in brief, is the whole Liturgy.

This form of divine service which we have constructed here on purely rational grounds is in fact the very form which is established in the Church by tradition. It will easily be recognized as the frame-work of all the Catholic liturgies, and as such it can be traced back to the time of Cyprian and Tertullian, of Iranaeus and Justin, — that is to say, back through the third century to nearly the beginning of the second. Th. Harnack, in the book which I referred to in the previous chapter, has traced the Liturgy to its earliest origins with more acumen than any one else has ever done, and in the present chapter I make much use of his work. This is not the place for a discussion of liturgical minutia. No one in the world will affirm that for the completest unity we must all use the same liturgy. Without offense we might each of us on occasion use several, as is the custom of the Greeks. At all events we cannot expect to unite at once in an adequate liturgy. For the sudden adoption of an elaborate liturgy could not but seem unreal and artificial to the many who have not been accustomed to regard the Eucharist as a regular constituent of common worship and have not even seriously considered what form might be appropriate to it.

It is certain, however, that, if we are generally to communicate together in this sacrament, some fundamental liturgical rules must be established and prescribed, to curb the idiosyncracies of the minister, supply his defects of taste and knowledge, and protect the people from the ecclesiastical tyranny of the parson.

The synoptical scheme suggested above falls far short of meeting this need. It is true that it implies a richer complex of worship than at first sight may appear. Scripture, sermon, supplication, praise, thanksgiving, is a short list of the parts of worship and a dry skeleton. But the worship which is built up upon this scheme may be very rich. The Scripture lessons are not poor, nor need the sermon be, nor the prayers. In all our Protestant communions we have at hand a precious heritage of hymns to enrich such a service. It was the custom in olden times to chant a number of psalms after the various lessons. The Roman and Anglican rites have retained mere vestiges of this feature (*i. e.* the responses, "Glory be to thee, O Lord", and "Thanks be to thee, O Christ"), if they have not lost even that. At this place those who will not chant either the Hebrew or the Christian psalms might sing metrical hymns. It belongs to the character of Christian worship that the people's part should everywhere be prominent.

But we are not now considering the didactic part of Christian worship, nor even the prayers which closely follow it. I would merely repeat with emphasis that here at this point, when the great Thanksgiving is to follow, no prayers are in place but petitions and that they should be regarded as the prayers of all the people, that they should therefore be couched in the simplest language, preferably in the ancient form of the deacon's bidding

prayer. In the Anglican liturgy the prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church" comes approximately in this place, but it does not completely fill the gap. It is not popular enough in its form, nor complete enough in its range of petitions. This, however, is not the only supplication in the Anglican liturgy. Other supplications follow the great Thanksgiving, as they do in the Roman rite and in all the Eastern liturgies except that of the Apostolic Constitutions, which is singular (and I believe more primitive) for the fact that the comprehensive supplication of the priest comes immediately after the deacon's bidding prayer and hence before the Thanksgiving. If this way is not more primitive, it is at least more logical.

I do not assume to decide whether the prayer for personal pardon and the absolution — that is, the people's preparation in general — ought to precede the Eucharistic prayer and form part of the general supplication or come immediately before the communion. In the Roman rite the confession of sin comes at the beginning of the Mass, or, more properly, before it, as the *priest's* preparation for officiating, but for the people it is repeated immediately before their communion. In the Anglican rite the popular confession with absolution is placed immediately before the Preface to the Canon. But recently it has been decided in America that "The prayer of humble access", which for a long while has been used after the Preface, shall be put in its proper place before the communion. It is a hopeful time when things like this can be accomplished, but we must do far greater things if ever we are reunited.

The Liturgy proper begins with the offering of the gifts. In spite of the pomp and prominence that is bestowed in many of our Churches upon the act of "taking up

the collection", it is doubtful if the people commonly regard it as a truly liturgical act — as an act at once of communion and of sacrifice. The collection of money in the Church is connected with the earlier practice of making gifts in kind, and that in turn was a vestige of the earliest, of bringing to the Lord's Table the food that was to serve for the common *agape*. Far as we have travelled from this primitive custom, the bread and wine which serve for the Eucharist are still a part of our offering at this point, and the moment when they are offered obviously marks the beginning of the sacrificial act.

We are all of us aware of, if we do not share, a spiritualistic tendency of our day which counts such material features incongruous with religion. The early Church knew well how to spiritualize them. It was *money* the disciples brought and laid at the Apostles' feet, but they recognized this as a spiritual fact, as a "communion". It was a gift in favour of the brethren, but it was a gift *to* God (Acts 5: 4), and hence at a later time it was regarded as a ritual sacrifice. But why should I say at a later time, when St. Paul speaks of the gifts sent him by the Philippian Church as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing to God"? (Phil. 4: 18). It was prescribed in the *Didache* that such gifts were to be presented to the prophets, alleging as the reason, "for they are your high priests". The sacrificial idea has always attached more particularly to the gifts offered at the Eucharist. In a special sense the bread and wine which were to serve for the Lord's Supper were regarded as the oblation of the people. This sacrifice is not the less spiritual for being material. The union of the material and the spiritual is a characteristic which the Sacrament shares with the Saviour himself. The Incarnation is at

once the explanation and the justification of the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. The Church at a very early age (and, we may suppose, in the earliest) discovered an instructive parallelism between the work of Creation and the work of Redemption. Justin Martyr (*Apol. c. 67*) finds both of these facts celebrated in the Sunday festival: "But on Sunday we all hold a meeting in common, since it is the first day, in which God transformed the darkness and dead matter to create the cosmos, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead". It was the distinction of the Catholic Church, as compared with the most dangerous heresies which threatened the faith, that it knew how to value justly both the material creation and the spiritual re-creation. The two are clearly combined in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But the Christians gave thanks for both at every common meal as well. So Justin implies, though doubtless he has in mind more particularly the great Eucharist, when he says (*Apol. c. 13*) that the Christians, *not* being atheists, praise with prayer and thanksgiving God the Creator of all for *everything* that they receive, having been taught that the only acceptable honour they can render unto God is not to consume with fire the elements he has made for man's nourishment, but to use them for themselves and give them to the needy, and at the same time to raise with thankful hearts hymns and pomp of words for the creation and preservation of the world and for its new creation in incorruptibility through the faith that is in Christ.

I cite this passage, in the first place, merely to show the importance that was attached to the oblation of the bread and wine, as samples of the created universe and symbols of God's universal goodness. But this at once

brings us to the very heart of the Eucharist and discloses the thought which was fundamental for the development of the liturgies. We see from this passage that the Christians of Justin's time could partake of no common meal without praising God the Father for the Creation, while as Christians they could not think of this without being mindful of the grace of Redemption. This was of course especially true of the Lord's Supper. It manifestly required a double commemoration (*anamnensis*): of God's goodness in Creation and Providence; and of his grace as revealed in the Incarnation and Passion of his Son. So Justin says in another place (*Dialogue c. 117*), that the only sacrifices perfect and well-pleasing to God are prayer and thanksgiving worthily offered. Such sacrifices the Christians were taught to offer at the memorial of their dry and liquid food (bread and wine), on which occasion memorial is also made of the suffering which the Son of God endured for them. With still clearer reference to the Eucharist he says (*Dialogue c. 41*): "Jesus Christ our Lord ordained that we should celebrate the *bread* of the Eucharist in memorial of his Passion, in order that we might give thanks to God *at the same time* for the fact that he created the world and all that is in it for man's sake, and that he hath delivered us from the evil into which we had fallen and hath utterly subdued the evil principalities and powers through Him who was subjected to suffering through the counsel of his will".

This double memorial appears even in the brief Eucharistic prayers of the *Didache*, though with more explicit reference to the coming Kingdom than to the Passion (1). And I count it as a proof of the primitive

(1) Having referred to them so often, I suppose I ought to

character of the liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions that it draws out fully and clearly the double memorial of God's goodness in nature and in grace, which we have discovered in Justin's writings, which was still more evidently illustrated in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and Cyprian, but which gradually became obscured as the liturgies developed.

This is a point of capital importance for the apprehension of the rationale of the Liturgy. The Catholic liturgies at present in use have so far obscured this double *anamnesis* that scholars who approach the subject from this end naturally fail to discern the significance of it. The character of this book does not allow of as full and convincing a

quote in full the Eucharistic prayers of the *Didache*.

“ Now concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks.

First for the cup:

We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of thy servant David, which thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus. To thee be the glory forever.

And for the broken (loaf):

We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus. To thee be the glory forever. Just as this broken (loaf) was once dispersed upon the hills and having been gathered (harvested) became one, so let thy Church be gathered from the four ends of the earth into thy kingdom. For thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.

After ye are filled (c. “ after supper ” Lk. 22 : 20) thus do ye give thanks:

We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name which thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus. To thee be the glory forever.

Thou, almighty Master, didst create all things for thy name's

demonstration as the importance of this subject demands, and I must refer to Th. Harnack's work oft quoted, pp. 266 ff., 285 ff., 395 ff.

We have sought in an orderly fashion to treat of each successive act in the Eucharistic service, beginning with the act of placing the bread and wine upon the Holy Table. Many have been accustomed to attach to this act no serious significance at all and regard it merely as a necessary antecedent to the consecration and communion. But we have seen that this act is in thought and idea closely associated with the consecration, and we may learn further from Irenaeus that it is closely associated with the communion. He says (*Adv. Haer. IV, 18*): "For we offer to him the things which are his, proclaiming appropriately the communion and oneness of flesh and spirit. For as that which on earth is bread, when it has received the invocation of God is no longer common bread but Eucharist, consisting of two things, at once

sake; both food and drink thou didst give to men for their enjoyment in order that they might give thanks unto thee; but to us thou hast graciously given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through thy Servant. Before all things we thank thee that thou art mighty. To thee be the glory forever.

Remember, Lord, thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love, and gather it from the four winds, the sanctified, into the kingdom which thou hast prepared for it. For thine is the glory forever.

Let grace come and let the world depart! Hosanna to the Son of David!

Whosoever is holy let him come! Whosoever is not let him depart!

Maranatha (i. e. the Lord cometh)! Amen.

But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they will.

earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies when they have received the Eucharist are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection ”.

“ Here in a nut-shell ”, says Th. Harnack (p. 300), “ we have the whole action of the Lord’s Supper; the *offering* of the gifts, the *proclamation* (*praedicatio*) of the institution, the *invocation* and *consecration*, and finally the *reception* and its consequent effects. But it is the first sentence which principally concerns us. In it Irenaeus says, if we grasp his view as a whole: We offer to God what is his, for in contrast to the Gnostics we believe and teach that there exists a ‘ communion ’, nay, a ‘ oneness ’ between the bodily and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the divine. For not only does there exist ‘ communion ’ between God and all created things by reason of the *Creation* itself, but for our Redemption the eternal Logos entered into union with the creature by taking upon him our flesh. Upon this double basis rests the Eucharistic offering, and itself bears witness to the intimate relationship and community existing between Creation and Redemption. The ‘ communion ’ is assumed and proclaimed in the prayer of praise, the ‘ oneness ’ is brought about by the subsequent thanksgiving and invocation. In this latter prayer faith asks and expects that the ‘ oneness ’ of the Body and Blood of Christ will be effected as a consequence of the Incarnation of the Lord and his institution of the Sacrament, and that through this in turn will be brought about that ‘ oneness ’ of Christ with the receivers, in which not only their souls are united to Christ but their bodies are made partakers of his incorruptibility and assured of the coming resurrection.

Thus in its Eucharistic celebration the Church sees

itself in the midst of God's great acts. The Creation and the Redemption, the events already passed and those still in promise, the deeds already accomplished for us and those which in and upon us are still to be accomplished, — for the congregation assembled in worship these all have their uniting center in the Eucharist. And all these things are here not simply taught but actually performed, and just as really are they felt and experienced. For this holy action is at once an operation of the incarnate Logos in the Church, and on the part of the Church it is a profession of faith in the communion and oneness of heaven and earth, of God and man, which in Christ's person is already accomplished and for his people is assured. In fact the whole Christian view of the world is reflected as at a focal point in the simple action of the Eucharist, as the faith of the early Church conceived it ”.

Harnack writes this in view of such information as can be gleaned about the liturgy in the second century. The information that we have about the third century is very much fuller and clearer, but all to the same effect, and it seems to me that the liturgy in the Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions agrees more thoroughly than any other with the conception of the Eucharist which we find in the writers of the second and third centuries. In that age the Sacrament was not only called a “mystery” (that is, a deep truth *revealed* to man), but it did actually enshrine a profound conception of the universe which assured to the Church an absolute triumph over all rival cults. We lately have been heeding too much the loud cry for “the simple Gospel”, believing that it was a popular demand. Therefore we have shamefacedly ignored our dogmas and advertised that the Church has no mysteries to reveal. The people thereupon have

gone out to invent mysteries of their own, and they fall down and worship them.

The *Sursum corda* with the following responses we can trace back to the time of Cyprian, — which affords no presumption that it is not earlier than that or even of Apostolic origin. Cyprian already knew the name of “preface” as applied to this response and the doxology which followed it. The praise of God for the glories of his Creation is the only *proper* preface to the great Thanksgiving for the wonders of his Grace. The so-called “Proper Prefaces” of the Western Church are a very improper innovation. They could not have been introduced till the perception of the significance of the double *anamnesis* was altogether lost. The liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions shows its antiquity chiefly in the fact that it elaborates this doxology, praising God not only for the work of Creation and his general providence over all his creatures, but also for the special favour which he showed to the chosen vessels of his grace under the old Covenant. This doxology ends with the *Ter Sanctus* (“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty”, *etc.*) of which we have record as early as the third century. The Preface or doxology was the “blessing” which consecrated the alms and oblations.

After the Preface followed *immediately* (and not as a separate or separable prayer) the great Thanksgiving for the blessings we have received in Christ. It included a memorial of our Lord’s Incarnation and Passion, and also, as was most natural, of the institution of the Sacrament; and it passed over into a double invocation: for the sanctifying of the elements, and also of the faithful who were about to partake of them. It is in this last connection that the Lord’s Prayer is in place, if it is to be used at

all. And here in fact it is found in all the Eastern liturgies which are still in use, and we are given to understand that it is a part of the people's preparation by the fact that it is uttered by them all together. Here doubtless it stood in the early Roman liturgy, and presumably as a popular prayer, until Gregory the Great, with the whimsical notion that the consecration was effected by these words, brought it nearer to the Canon and prescribed that it be said by the priest alone. It was far more whimsical for the English Reformers to show their contempt for the universal tradition of the Church by putting the Lord's Prayer *after* the communion. In America there is hope that in two years' time we may be able to put it back in its proper place, as we have already restored to the people the right to say it. But there is always the doubt whether the General Convention two years hence will still be inspired by the same spirit. We are very insular on our great continent, and it is difficult to interest Americans in the universal customs of the Church.

But though we succeed in this, we shall have no cause to glory so long as we persist in retaining in use a false translation of one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Our Lord did not teach his disciples to say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us". The word "debts" is the word he used, and which he also illustrated by his parables. This is a broader word by far: if ever we have difficulty in remembering a recent trespass, we can profitably think upon our debts. No other Church in Christendom uses such a phrase as we have adopted: it is an ignominious distinction of the Anglican Churches. For our own sake as well as for the sake of unity we ought to be in haste to correct our error. The Lord's Prayer is the only formula common

to the whole of Christendom, and we are not ashamed of garbling it.

But to return to the Liturgy. I am glad to quote the words in which Th. Harnack (p. 398) expresses his admiration for the conclusion of the great doxology in the liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions: "The turn which is given to the conclusion of this prayer is characteristic and worthy of note. It rises to the highest pitch of praise when it unites with the heavenly principalities and powers to glorify God, with the hosts of angels and archangels, the cherubim and seraphim, and thus prepares the way for the 'Seraphic Hymn', in which the congregation joins and with which the great doxology ends. The influence of the Apocalypse is unmistakable (cf. cap. 4 especially). But, for all that, it deserves to be remarked how appropriate and beautiful is this conclusion of a prayer which has for its object the glorification of God the Father in his creative might and heavenly majesty. How can the Church more worthily praise him than by uniting itself with the representatives and ministers of his might which day and night stand before his throne and glorify him with their praise?"

It occurs to me to remark that the "Episcopal" House of Bishops was this year not sufficiently inspired to permit the restoration of the old conclusion of the Angelic Hymn: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord", in spite of the fact that it stands in all the ancient liturgies and that our Lord himself admonished: "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mt 23: 39). The fear has been expressed that the restoration of this phrase might be taken to imply that Christ is really present in the Sacrament. It might indeed. And yet the danger

that many would take it in a materialistic sense is not now imminent. Neither is there imminent danger that many would take it in its most ancient sense, as an expectation of the coming King and Kingdom, an expression of the eschatological orientation of this sacrament, which was plainly indicated by the "*Maranatha!*" (the Lord cometh!) with which the Eucharistic prayer of the *Didache* ends.

It is a curious and significant fact that from the fourth century onward (that is, from the time when the Christians were free to build and adorn great churches) the themes for the decoration of the apsidal end of the basilicas were drawn exclusively from the Apocalypse of St. John. The fact is strange because it was just at this time that apocalyptic eschatology fell into the deepest disfavour, so that the Apocalypse of St. John came near being excluded from the canon of Holy Scripture through the machinations of Constantine and his court bishop Eusebius. The fact is that the Emperor and his court preferred to believe that the apocalyptic prophesies were substantially fulfilled in the triumphant Church and the Christianized Empire. The puzzle here proposed is in part resolved when we note that the themes preferred for the decoration of the churches were not taken from the predictive prophesies of St. John, but from his vision of the worship in heaven on the Lord's Day. The earliest mosaics of this sort depict Christ enthroned in the midst of his Apostles in the New Jerusalem. There is a rainbow about the throne, and the four rivers of paradise (the four Gospels) issue from beneath it. Christ stretches forth his hand as the Teacher of the world. About him are the four angelic creatures which cry, Holy, Holy, Holy; and on either hand stand the four and twenty elders. The

Lamb with the book of the seven seals stands on an altar below the throne. The creative hand reaches through the clouds at the top of the vault; and, below, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove rains influence upon the Church. This grandiose theme illustrated the double aspect of the Eucharistic worship: the doxology for the Creation; and the thanksgiving for Christ and his Redemption.

Yet, in spite of the persistence of this theme in art, it is observable that the liturgies from century to century gradually diminish the doxology for the Creation. This was likely due to the pessimism that prevailed in the West after the destruction of the Empire and the collapse of civilization. The double character of the memorial is still evident in the Eastern liturgies, for the Eastern Empire survived till long after the liturgies had assumed their permanent form. God the Creator is praised before the *Ter Sanctus*, God the Redeemer is thanked after it. But in the Roman liturgy this primitive disposition was obscured by the "Proper Prefaces", which coming before the *Ter Sanctus* and recounting the works of God's grace under the *New Covenant*, usurped the place of the doxology to the Creator.

Moreover, the introduction of the Proper Prefaces into the Missal had, in a merely mechanical way, the effect of obscuring the unity of the Eucharistic prayer. For their interpolation at this point necessitated an interruption in the manuscript and led to the notion that the Eucharistic prayer proper began after the *Ter Sanctus* and comprised only what came to be known as the Canon. The sense of the continuity of the Eucharistic prayer (beginning with the *Sursum corda* and ending only with the great *Amen*) was so thoroughly lost that it seemed to the English Reformers perfectly natural and appropriate to

throw into the great gap made by the proper prefaces any new material they thought good to use. So here they placed the "prayer of humble access", which Archbishop Herrmann of Cologne with proper feeling had composed as a preparation for the communion. In America we have now the hope of doing away with this horrible ineptitude which breaks into the midst of a prayer of praise and thanksgiving with a humble confession of unworthiness to receive the Sacrament. The worst of it is that after this confession made with bended knee it is impossible to proceed in the tone of praise which has reached a high pitch in the *Ter Sanctus* and which ought to rise in crescendo as we utter our thanksgiving for God's work of redemption. Hence it comes about that many do not recognize that the "Canon" is strictly a prayer of thanksgiving, in spite of the fact that in the Anglican liturgy it begins with the words, "All glory be to thee, Almighty God". I have in mind an "Episcopal" professor of divinity who said to me that the "words of institution" which are incorporated in this prayer ought to be recited by the priest with his face turned towards the people, because this part of the liturgy must be regarded as a Scripture lesson.

The Eucharistic prayer may properly comprise other memorials besides the outstanding memorials of Creation and Redemption. The historic liturgies do in fact contain many memorials both of the faithful departed and of persons still living on earth. But, however this prayer may be prolonged, we must note that it ends only with the Amen. Justin, even in his brief account of Christian worship, counted it a matter worthy of note that the Eucharistic prayer concluded with an Amen uttered by all the people. We may learn from numerous examples in the

New Testament that the Amen was used more particularly, indeed almost exclusively, after doxologies and thanksgivings. The Amen which we utter in this place is the most solemn we ever say in the Church. Till the people have made this response, and so attested that the Eucharistic prayer is their prayer, this act is not finished. And if it is the thanksgiving which consecrates the elements of bread and wine, how can we regard them as consecrated until the prayer is finished. If the English Reformers had reflected upon this consideration, they hardly would have departed from the universal custom of the Church by directing the priest to break the bread at the moment when, in the memorial of the institution, he utters the words, "he brake it". According to the custom of all other Catholic Churches the *fractio panis* comes at the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer. The Anglican revisers were doubtless prompted to this invention by the intention of doing what the Lord did. But it was "a corrupt following" of the Lord, for Christ broke the loaf *after* he had given thanks, and therefore the ancient liturgies follow him exactly. If we were consistently to imitate the Lord's acts after the fashion attempted by the Reformers, we should have to postpone the memorial of Christ's word, "This is my Blood", till after the communion, for St. Mark (14: 23, 24) records that it was not till after all had drunk the cup that the Lord thus defined its meaning.

To do what Christ did at the Last Supper is, however, the rule we must follow if we would adhere to the tradition and agree in a concordant custom. St. Cyprian (*Epist.* 63, *De Sacramento Dominici Calicis*) earnestly insists upon the necessity of following the tradition of the Lord who was "the authour and teacher of this sacrifice". "For you know", he says, "that we are admonished that

in offering the chalice the Lord's tradition is to be followed, nor may anything be done by us but what for us the Lord first did, — wherefore the chalice which is offered in memory of him must be offered with wine mixed [with water]". And farther on: "Hence it is plain that the Blood of Christ is not offered if wine is lacking in the chalice, nor is the Lord's sacrifice celebrated with legitimate sanctification unless our oblation [the people's gifts] and sacrifice [the priest's part] correspond with the Passion [*i. e.* with the details of the institution]... For if our Lord and God is himself the High-priest of God the Father and first offered himself to the Father as a sacrifice and ordained that we do this in commemoration of him, then that priest truly acts in Christ's stead (*vice Christi vere fungitur*) who imitates what Christ did, and he then offers a full and true sacrifice to God the Father when he so undertakes to offer as he sees that Christ offered... And since we make mention of his Passion in every sacrifice (for the Passion of the Lord *is* the sacrifice which we offer) we ought to do nothing else but what he did. As often therefore as we offer the chalice in commemoration of the Lord and of his Passion we do what it is evident the Lord did".

The most fundamental application of this rule, though it is an application which in Cyprian's time it was superfluous to insist upon is to the effect that we should give thanks *as the Lord did*. It is certain that our Lord in giving thanks for the bread and wine regarded them as instances of the universal goodness of the Father in heaven who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. If we in the Eucharist do not praise God in this fashion, we do not do what the Lord did.

Justin says that the bread and wine are sanctified "by means of the word of prayer which is his" (διὰ λόγῳ ἐυχίας τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ). There is contention about the meaning of this phrase. I believe that Justin refers to the prayer of thanksgiving which Jesus uttered at the Last Supper, rather than to the "words of institution". At all events, we may profitably reflect that the *Pater Noster*, which on *one* occasion Jesus taught to his disciples, is not so appropriately called "the Lord's Prayer" as is the thanksgiving at meals which he many times uttered in their presence, and which doubtless they continued to use in memory of him. Jesus taught his disciples to say, "*Our* Father", but he himself said, *My* Father; and he never put himself so much on a level with men as to confess his "debts" due to God and unpaid.

It is by this Lord's Prayer of thanksgiving that we consecrate the bread and wine. In this we imitate him. But one thing we must do that he did not do at the Last Supper. He instituted the Supper and foretold his Passion: we must commemorate the Institution and recall the Passion as a fact accomplished. It is a difference of tense.

The priest acts "in Christ's stead". This phrase of Cyprian's, like the much earlier expressions used by St. Ignatius with regard to the bishop (that he is to be revered as Christ himself), is really not so unevangelical as it sounds to us. It reflects the actual situation at the Eucharist. He who presides there does indeed sit in Christ's seat and is bound to do what Christ did.

From this point of view we arrive less laboriously at the same conclusion that Th. Harnack reached by patient historical investigation. We perceive that theoretically the central and essential feature of the Eucharistic celebration must be a prayer of thanksgiving containing a double

memorial: of God's wisdom and goodness as displayed in his works of creation and providence; and of his grace in the redemption of the world by the Incarnation and Passion of his Son Jesus Christ.

If this long disquisition about the Liturgy has seemed irrelevant to the problem of Church unity, I hope that the conclusion may not seem so. For supposing that we had all of us the best will in the world to unite upon an acceptable liturgy, we have not had enough light to guide us. Those who have actually tried or are trying now to enrich their bare forms of worship from the treasures of ancient devotion pick out this and that feature at random without knowing how to discern what is essential to the liturgies and typical of their structure or how to distinguish these parts from others which (to use an expression of Ruskin's) have only "a parasitical sublimity".

I have insisted that the essential form of the Eucharist is a prayer of thanksgiving which contains a double memorial: (1) the doxology to God, which is at the same time the offering and consecration of the gifts (which Origen calls "the symbol of thanksgiving to God"); and (2) the thanksgiving for the benefits which we have received through Christ, which is the consecration of the bread and wine for the purpose of the Sacrament.

But surely no one now would wish to pare down this thanksgiving to the bone by omitting, as the Church of England has done, almost everything that is not absolutely essential. And if there are any who are inclined to ignore the old formulas and adorn their prayer with some new "pomp of words", they should reflect that they thereby repudiate the hope of uniting all Christians in one Eucharist. I think I have made it clear that Protestants of the Reformed denominations would not be copying the

“Episcopalians” but simply conforming to the custom of the universal Church were they to begin their doxology with the *Sursum corda*, conclude it with the *Ter Sanctus*, incorporate in the Thanksgiving a memorial of the Institution and conclude it with the *Pater Noster* and the popular Amen.

Such a liturgy, so far as the form is concerned, would be acceptable to all. It is by no means a bare minimum. But I am pleading rather for the maximum of conformity, and I do not see any reason why we might not unite upon such an order as the following.

I. THE DIDACTIC PART

- 1, *Scripture lessons, accompanied with Psalms or hymns, and followed by the Nicene Creed.*
- 2, *Sermon.*

II. THE MYSTICAL PART

- 1, *Supplications and intercession.*
- 2, *The oblations (including the alms).*
- 3, *The Eucharistic prayer.*
 - a, *Sursum corda etc.*
 - b, *Doxology (which is the offering of the oblations).*
 - c, *The Ter Sanctus.*
 - d, *The thanksgiving for the Incarnation ad Passion of Jesus Christ, including the memorial of the Institution and of the dead and the living who are mysteriously united in it.*

Invocation:

For the sanctification of the elements:

For the sanctification of the people who are about to receive.

The Lord's Prayer.

The Amen.

- 4, *A confession and absolution.*
 - 5, *The communion.*
 - 6, *A Psalm or hymn.*
 - 7, *The benediction.*
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CHAPTER VII

A COMMON MINISTRY

I have said at the outset that the problem of the Christian ministry and the form of Church organization does not deserve the prominence that has been given it in all discussions about reunion. Nevertheless it is important, and it must be resolved if Christian union is to be expressed in Church unity.

What I say here I have already expounded more fully and with more abundant proofs in my work on *The Church and its Organization*. Here I have summarized the conclusions of that earlier work, singling out the factors which have a bearing upon the problem of Church unity and reunion, and endeavoring to "put teeth" into the discussion.

From this new point of view, however, all the problems we are dealing with have another aspect and assume different proportions. One matter which emerged incidentally in my former academic discussion of Church organization claims here a position of prime importance in relation to the problem of reunion. That is the topic which gives the title to this chapter. It must be recognized at the outset that the question of principal importance

for Church unity or reunion is not the form of Church organization but the existence of a common ministry. The practical question is, whether as things are now we can all of us *recognize* the various ministries which exist, or what must be done by any or by all of them to insure common recognition.

It is true that the existence of divers forms of organization side by side would imply an actual division of Christians, a perpetuation of denominationalism, even if we were in all other respects united. And it is likely that a common ministry would in the end insure a common and uniform organization. But the fact that uniformity of organization is natural and desirable must not be allowed to obscure to us the more fundamental necessity of a commonly recognized ministry. That would suffice for unity even if the Church were differently organized in various parts of the world, or if it had nowhere an organization more general than that of the congregation with its parochial pastor. The pastor who potentially is everywhere recognized as such is a pastor in the Church of God as a whole. Wherever he is recognized as a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God he is not regarded merely as a parochial officer. On the other hand, without a commonly recognized ministry there is no unity even when the organization is formally the same, as it is in the case of the Roman, Anglican, and Orthodox Churches.

There never was any dispute about the form of Church organization until the Protestant Reformation. The subsequent controversies about Church government have exceedingly exasperated this issue and destroyed our sense of proportion. For if it be true that a common organization is necessary to insure the common recognition of the

ministry, this last effective result of the whole machinery of organization is its chief reason for being and is therefore the matter of prime importance.

In the Apostolic age there was a lack of general organization, and yet parochialism was less in evidence than it is now in the most highly organized Churches. The general over-head organization in terms of metropolitan, archbishop, and patriarch is chiefly useful as a means of offsetting the tendency to parochialism. But there was no tendency to parochialism in the early age for the reason that the parish did not exist, that the very idea of parochial organization was lacking. For, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, every assembly of Christians was regarded not as a parish but as the Church, as an assembly of Christendom. Therefore the organization of the assembly was not regarded as a parochial organization but as an organization of the Ecclesia, as an ecumenical organization. Consequently the office-bearers or organs of the congregation were organs of the Church and not merely organs of the congregation considered as something else than the Church or as a *part* of the whole. This evidently was not "Congregationalism". And it is clear that such a conception favoured rather the development of the Catholic organization of the Church, or at any rate some sort of organization apt to express the ideal unity of the whole.

It will of course be objected that a general organization was not lacking in the Apostolic age. First of all there were the Apostles. It is evident that they were not parochial officers. Neither were the prophets and teachers, nor the travelling evangelists who later were called "apostles". Moreover it is my contention that not even the bishops and deacons were merely parochial officers. They were

Church officers and belonged like the Apostles to the general organization of the Church. There was a difference only in the character of their activities and the degree of their authority. If there had been a profound incongruity between the status and functions of the prophets and teachers on the one hand and of the bishops and deacons on the other, it could hardly have been said at the beginning of the second century that the bishops and deacons perform the ministration of the prophets and teachers, nor could any such transference of function have come about. The Apostles and other travelling evangelists evidently played a very great part in keeping the scattered Christian communities united. But the simplest Christians, travelling upon their own business and without any official standing, contributed in their measure to the same effect; and the humble bishops, though their functions required them to remain in one place, had no small part in this lively interrelation between the Churches, inasmuch as they especially were expected to "be given to hospitality".

The Church was in fact richly organized by the bestowal of spiritual gifts. St. Paul is speaking of the general organization of the Church when he says (1 Cor. 12: 28): "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, wise counsels, kinds of tongues"; and (Ephes. 4: 11): "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, pastors and teachers". It is evident that not all the gifts enumerated in the first list gave rise to distinct *offices*, yet all contributed to the organization, "the building up", of the Body of Christ. The Church is organized when it has organs which severally perform their proper functions.

In a sense, therefore, the Apostolic Church had a

general organization and no other sort of organization. But it was *not* organized in a political sense, — which is the sort of organization we commonly have in mind. It was no part of the earliest idea of Church organization that the various organs, besides performing their appropriate functions, should get together to confer and decide about the polity of the Church. The prophets, evangelists, and teachers did not meet together in presbyteries, synods, or councils. Nor was there any such thing as a council of the Apostles. That is an invention of the second century. There is no evidence in the New Testament that the Apostles felt a corporate responsibility for the order of the Church and expressed it by meeting in a body. In another connection I have pointed out that the so-called Apostolic Council at Jerusalem was simply a meeting of the Church in that place. It was an important meeting because this was the mother Church, to which none could deny recognition as a Church of Christ. Moreover it contained among its members “men who were reputed to be somewhat”: “James, Cephas and John, who are reputed to be pillars”, — as St. Paul says in Gal. 2: 9, not without a vein of irony. These men were the universally recognised exponents of Christianity, and by the fact that they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship they recognised their ministry in a public and formal way. That was the only outcome of the “council” which St. Paul counted worthy of mention. The “decree” recorded in the Acts (15: 28, 28), emanated not from the Apostles but from the whole Church in Jerusalem (v. 22). And in spite of the authority of that Church and of the “pillars”, the Gentile Christians did not honour it by obedience. St. Paul did not rigorously insist upon abstention from “things offered to idols”;

and the prohibition of "things strangled" (*i. e.* meat which is not *kosher*) seems to have been universally ignored, being in fact a primitive Hebrew *tabu* to which the Gentile Christians could attach no moral significance. It cannot plausibly be made out that the Apostles as a "college" ever took any other action for the good order of the Church. The New Testament does not happen to recount any occasion when as many as two Apostles met outside of Jerusalem, except when Paul met Cephas at Antioch and disagreed with him (Gal. 2: 11). Individually an Apostle might claim a very high authority, but that does not imply organization in our sense of the word.

The Apostolic Church was not organized in the political sense which we require, yet no one will pretend that it was not effectively organized. It had all that was necessary to Church organization when it had a common ministry commonly recognized. To insure the recognition of its ministry it had, moreover, appropriate rites and ceremonies. The Apostles Barnabas and Paul were elected, ordained, and sent by the Church in Antioch. That act was important for their recognition. That it was effective in *making* them Apostles Paul would not allow (Gal. 1: 1).

The idea of the importance of the *recognition* of a common ministry has emerged (I do not know from what source) in the proposals for reunion made by the last Lambeth Conference. The third and last item there mentioned as a requisite for the unity of the Church is:

"A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body". And the plan for reunion contemplates "a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry" to other denominations; while on

the other hand it insists upon the importance of episcopal ordinations as "obtaining a ministry throughout the whole fellowship", *i. e.* a universal recognition.

I am so glad to see this new emphasis upon the importance of "recognition" that I have little heart to criticize the form of the above statement. But it seems to me that "the inward call of the Spirit" is not a thing clearly separate and distinct from "the commission of Christ". This inward call, if it can be in any way attested, must be regarded as the most authentic commission of Christ. And I cannot see how anyone who has plainly a commission from Christ gains any increment of authority by having also "the authority of the whole body". Is not the authority of Christ enough? Has the "body" an authority superior to that of the head? Has it even any authority at all?

Already, in speaking of the idea of the Church, I have had occasion to deny that the Church as a corporation possesses authority. It is rather to be regarded as the sphere in which God's authority is revealed and exercised.

This consideration obliges us to enquire, before we go any further, what is the character of the Christian ministry and whence it derives its authority.

We do not have to appeal to the pronouncements of medieval popes to find testimony to the exalted authority of the Christian ministry. St. Paul says of the ministry (1 Cor. 4: 1): "Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." It may be objected that St. Paul is here speaking only of the Apostles and of their exalted authority. And it is true that he is thinking in the first instance of himself and Cephas and Apollos. Apollos presumably was not an Apostle; but in any case it is clear that St. Paul's expressions

are meant to cover the higher ministry as a whole : Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers. If this were all that he includes we should not find ourselves much instructed for our present purpose, for all these ministries have vanished. But in the New Testament the words “minister” and “ministry” are used in such a way that they must be applied to all who exercise the high function of teaching. He who preaches the Gospel is a “minister of the word”, a minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God. He is *not* a minister of the congregation, though he serves it with his ministry. The usage is clear and consistent. The minister does not derive his authority from the people to whom he ministers — from the congregation or from the whole Church. At the most he depends upon the Church for the *recognition* of his ministry. He is not a minister *of* the congregation or *of* the Church: more properly he might be described as a minister *in* the Church. He derives his “sufficiency” not from the Church but, as St. Paul says, “from God, who also made us sufficient ministers of the New Covenant” (2 Cor. 3: 6; cf. 1 Pet. 4: 11, 12). But for all that, St. Paul asserts in this same connection, We are “your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 cor. 4: 5). The fact that the Christian ministry performs a serviceable function is no derogation of its honour and authority, for serviceableness was learned from Jesus; he said of himself, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mk 10: 45). Consequently any labour in the Church for the sake of others was regarded as a title to honour and authority, as St. Paul implies in 1 Cor. 16: 15: 16: “Now I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have *laid*

themselves out to minister unto the saints), that ye also be *in subjection* unto such, and to every one that *helpeth in the work and laboureth*".

But the fundamental explanation of the authority of the Christian ministry is indicated in the expression "minister of the word". It is the authority inherent in the teaching gift. It belongs therefore to the teaching office as such. The gift of teaching includes also the gift of regiment (rule and government). For to determine what is to be *done* in the Church one must inquire what is the will of God. It is only the teacher that can give a response to this inquiry. Hence the Epistle to the Hebrews, when it speaks of "them that had the rule over you" (the ἡγούμενοι), qualifies these persons further by the phrase, "which spoke unto you the word of God" (Heb. 13: 7); and the *Didache* (IV. 1) enjoins: "My child, remember day and night him who speaks unto you the word of God, and honour him as the Lord". According to the *Didache* "the prophets are your high-priests"; and St. Paul too regarded the preaching of the Gospel as the priestly act *par excellence*, for in Rom. 15: 16 the expression which we translate by the noncommittal phrase "ministering the Gospel" means literally "ministering as a sacrificial priest".

For this reason the authority of the Christian ministry is neither an autocratic nor a legal authority: it is the authority resident in God's word. The honour and obedience which is due to the minister is due only on the assumption that he speaks the word of God. If that assumption falls to the ground, — if it is evident that he is speaking his own words and interpreting his own will, — his authority at once vanishes.

During the period covered by the writings of the New

Testament circumstances had not arisen which would make it natural to single out the bishops and deacons for special honour. But as the higher ministry disappeared they took its place. As the *Didache* puts it, "They too perform the ministration of the prophets and teachers". It was not long before the presbyters were viewed in the same light, — as teachers, therefore as rulers.

Whatever authority bishops, deacons, and presbyters enjoyed in the early Church they enjoyed as God's ministers, not as the ministers of the people. The government of the Church does not rest upon popular sovereignty, nor are its powers in any sense derived from "the authority of the whole body". The commission of Christ is all in all. The government of the Church is essentially *authoritative*, even in a sense "monarchical", because it is the authority of God exercised through individuals. What the Church does as a "body" is not to *add* any authority to Christ's commission, but to give it *recognition* and so to insure to it a general acknowledgement.

The question for us is, How is recognition of the ministry to be attained throughout the whole Church? and how is it to be expressed?

To us this seems of necessity to involve a consideration of Church order and organization. And doubtless *for us* this is now necessary. But chiefly is it necessary, not for the purpose of modelling our present organization after the example of the Apostolic age, but for finally disposing of the idea that any such imitation is possible. It is impossible, not for the reason that the organization of the Apostolic Church is obscure, but for the reason that the situation has changed. It was changed very radically when the Apostles and prophets disappeared from the scene. It was then that the bishops and deacons

attained a prominence they had not enjoyed before. The wandering evangelists of the sub-Apostolic age, which for a while served to keep up communication between the scattered Christian communities, hardly lasted beyond the end of the first century. By that time the bishops, as pastors of the local congregation and chief persons in the community, were able to keep the Churches in contact, not so much by personal travelling as by means of messengers and letters. This is the situation depicted in the letters of Ignatius. He represents the bishop as president in every solemn assembly of the Church, with the presbyters as his assessors and the deacons as his helpers. But before long the numerical growth of the Church made it impossible for the bishop to perform all the functions of a parochial pastor. The congregations multiplied in every great city, and the bishop could not preside in all of them at once. To meet this condition the Church might have chosen to appoint as many bishops as there were congregations. There was precedent in Apostolic times, and perhaps later, for a plurality of bishops in the same city, — in the case of Philippi, Corinth, and perhaps Rome. This solution would have been the most conservative, for it would have left unchanged the congregational organization, the familiar aspect of every Christian assembly. But the Church, for the sake of preserving its unity and that symbol of its unity which it possessed in the *singularity* of the bishop's office (for the bishop had always had a unique position in his own congregation), — the Church, I say, for the sake of unity preferred another solution, though this involved the momentous change of withdrawing the bishop from the congregational pastorate and putting the presbyter there in his place. Here we have the organization which was universal at

the end of the third century and which was doubtless established in all the greater centers by the middle of the second. The "country-bishop" alone remained a congregational pastor, and for that reason he was accounted hardly better than a presbyter.

I give here this brief sketch, in outlines which are incontrovertable, chiefly for the sake of making it clear that no Church today reproduces exactly the organization which prevailed in the Apostolic age or in the age which immediately succeeded it. The so-called "Catholic Apostolic Church" of the Irvingites is the only one that even professes to do so. For the Reformed Churches, though they claim to found their Church organization upon Holy Scripture, are careful to distinguish those offices "which were intended to be permanent" from those which were not; and since the Church of Geneva actually had only presbyters, ruling-elders and deacons they alone were proved to be permanent, while Apostles, prophets, teachers and evangelists go by the board. The less said about ruling-elders the better. One branch of the Reformed Church long ago ruled them out, — not as representing an office which was meant to be transitory, but an office which never existed. No one will doubt that presbyters and deacons were meant to be permanent; but if they alone remain when all the higher offices are no more, how is *that* an imitation of the Apostolic organization? It is as though one were to claim that he had imitated the human body when he had produced arms and legs, the head being gone. For the presbyters are not even supposed to supply the unifying function which the higher ministry performed. Nor do the Catholic Churches of today reproduce the organization of the Apostolic Church. They do not even conform to the order which prevailed

in the second century and was exalted by St. Ignatius, but, with various unessential modifications, they reproduce the episcopal organization which was known to St. Cyprian in the third century. This was the "monarchical" episcopate (if any one cares to call it so), under which the whole local community finds its center in the bishop.

The circumstances which brought about the development which I have sketched above were not transient. The fact that they are still to be reckoned with prohibits the thought that we might reverse the process and return to the organization of the Apostolic age. Some would say, "to the *simplicity* of the Apostolic age". But the Irvingites, who alone have seriously set themselves the task of restoring the organization of that age perceived that it was anything but simple. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, bishops, presbyters and deacons (and also "angels") suggest a more elaborate organization than any we know now. And we cannot restore certain of these offices if we would. One of the marks of the Apostle was the fact that he was an eye-witness of the Lord's resurrection. We can have such Apostles no more. And we rarely encounter a prophet. But the disappearance of the original Apostles and the increasing rarity of the charismatic ministry were not the only circumstances which compelled a reconstruction of Church organization. Another factor was the numerical growth of the Church. We cannot go back to the Ignatian episcopate, unless the Church dwindles to one congregation in every city, or unless we see reason to reverse the decision of the second century and multiply congregational bishops (one for every congregation), rather than stress the importance of the episcopate as the center and symbol of unity. Theoretically we are free to reverse this ancient and universal decision and return to the parochial episcopate.

The Presbyterians like to boast that this is what they have. Those who regard the bishop chiefly as a channel for the transmission of divine grace (the Apostolic succession) can raise no grave objection to this from their point of view. And in fact a number of High Anglicans (the late Bishop Wordsworth in particular) have been inclined to regard with fond favour (it would seem almost with envy) the Presbyterian Churches, which more closely than any others reproduce the *form* of the parochial organization of the second century. I do not say, of the first century, because the Presbyterians have no Apostles or prophets, and for the unification of the Church as a whole they rely upon the "classical presbytery", the synod, and the general assembly, which are all of them institutions unknown to the first century of our Lord. But so far as the single congregation is concerned, the single pastor supported by several elders and deacons does seem to reproduce the earliest form of Church organization. The resemblance, however, becomes less clear when we look more closely into the matter. For the "ruling-elders" are *not* presbyters: they are the representatives (in the political sense) of the sovereign people, and hence they are not ministers of God. And the deacon is a purely perfunctory addendum, a concession to the tradition: no one knows precisely what function he ought to perform, and therefore the Churches frequently fail to elect such an officer. It may be said that the deacon is rather superfluous in most of the Catholic Churches. There too he has no longer a definite function to perform. But at least he is a minister, he has an office in the Church, whereas the presbyterian (and Congregational) deacon has only an office in the particular congregation, he is simply a layman who passes the plate. As a matter of fact this form of organization

is more impressive on paper than in practice. For in practice it is realized only on the rare occasions of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when the pastor sits with the elders at the Lord's Table and the deacons minister to them. At the customary preaching services one is aware of no distinctions in the congregation except that between pastor and people, and few stop to consider whether the Presbyterian parochial organization is in any respect different from that of the Congregational or the "Episcopal" Churches.

For all that, the suggestion is a plausible one that unity as between Presbyterians and Anglicans might be attained simply by conferring episcopal orders upon all Presbyterian pastors, — making them all bishops. The Presbyterians will not listen to this: they urge in rebuttal that it would be much simpler to recognize the orders they already have.

But if union could be brought about in that way, it would be at the price of sacrificing the episcopate as the symbol of unity. For it is only when there is *one* bishop in every community that the episcopate can guarantee the soundness and unity of the Church in that community and maintain it in its relations with neighbouring and distant Churches. The bishop is *the* recognized person in his community, and as such he and he alone can confer recognition. They who are recognized by the bishop are in communion with all who are in communion with him. The bishop as the recognized Christian is the *point de repère*, the *tertium comparationis*.

The circumstances which in the second century influenced the Church to decide in favour of moniscopacy — that is, to retain the single episcopate where it was already established, notwithstanding the multiplication of

congregations, — and which in the third century prompted the rule that there might be but *one* bishop in any city — these circumstances, I say, have not altered. Rather it would seem as if we had now more compelling reason to maintain the single episcopate where it exists and to restore it where it is lacking. For if the mere threat of heresy and schism was enough to decide this question in that early time, the existence now of many and inveterate schisms would seem to be a still more decisive reason, if now there is hope of restoring Church unity.

I have already made it plain that I do not consider uniformity of organization one of the first things to be attained in seeking reunion. And for my own part I am not inclined to assert that the episcopate (in the diocesan or in any other form) is essential to the being of the Church. The very idea of the Church as I have presented it in a previous chapter excludes such a dogmatic estimation of the episcopate; and for historical reasons I find myself unable to assent to the doctrine of Apostolic succession through the episcopate, which is the only dogmatic basis for the claim that apart from the bishop there can be no Church. At this point I am not even emphasizing the claim implied in the phrase, “ the historic episcopate ”, — that is to say, I am not advocating the episcopate merely on the ground that it is an ancient institution. I have in view the more pragmatic consideration that the bishop is a visible center of unity. It is true that the unity of the Church was not preserved by the episcopate, and it would be a great delusion to expect that unity would be restored merely by the universal adoption of the episcopal organization. The Roman and the Orthodox Churches have been separated for more than a millennium

in spite of the identity of their forms of organization. For all that, it is perfectly certain that the whole Church will never be united without the episcopate. This is a negative argument, but it is conclusive. To suggest that those Churches which have the episcopate would be willing to jetson it for the sake of organic unity with those which have it not is a *reductio ad absurdum*. I can imagine that if such a consummation seemed possible and imminent, many Presbyterians and others in a like position would draw back in consternation before the peril of losing forever and throughout the whole of Christendom an institution which attaches us to the very beginnings of Christianity and which has existed in its present form since the second century. We are bound after all to attach great weight to the consideration that the episcopate is "historic".

Regarding the question still from a negative point of view, it is evident that any plan which even remotely anticipates a reunion of the *whole* Church must take into consideration the fact that all who profess and call themselves Catholics account the episcopate a constituent factor of the Church. We must have some regard for the scruple of these brethren, even if we count it a weakness. It is vain to imagine that we can dispose of this scruple by argument. For the doctrine of Apostolic succession is as ancient as the third century and has been deeply woven into the texture of dogmatic theology. And while the historical data in favour of it are not of a sort that would convince the unbelievers, those opposed are hardly clear enough to confound such as already are attached to the dogma. For this reason such a thing as the Methodist episcopate which claims no succession cannot be accepted by the whole of Christendom.

It is not credible, therefore, that all those who now reject the doctrine of Apostolic succession can ever be persuaded to accept it, and it is equally incredible that all those who now hold to this doctrine can be persuaded to reject it.

This situation either represents an *impasse*, or it is an opportunity for Christian charity. It must be understood, however, that so far as the Anglican Churches are concerned this impossibility which we have envisaged is not a practical difficulty. In requiring the acceptance of the episcopate they do not exact the acceptance of any particular theory with regard to it. It would in fact be both absurd and impossible for the Anglican Churches to make such a requirement of outsiders so long as they do not make it of those who are now within their communion.

From the negative point of view the episcopate must be regarded as a *sine qua non* for the reunion of Christendom. But I prefer rather to insist upon the positive considerations in favour of the episcopate. There is a sense in which all can accept the bishop as a successor of the Apostles. In the sense, namely, in which the *Didache* regards the bishops and deacons as the successors of the higher ministry which was on the point of vanishing: "For they too perform the ministration of the prophets and teachers". The bishops did, *as a matter of fact*, take over such functions of the higher ministry as they were capable of performing. In particular they served as symbols of unity both for the individual congregation and for the Church at large. With the disappearance of the Apostolic ministry someone had to perform this function, for it is a function essential to the unity of the Church; and the bishops were able in this respect to take the place of the Apostles because for this function no condition was essen-

tial except the fact of general recognition. We find this pragmatic conception of succession in the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians. This therefore is the conception which prevailed in Rome at the end of the first century. And long after this time, at the beginning of the third century, the conception of Apostolic succession which we find in Irenaeus is still a purely historical one, and independent of the doctrine of the grace of orders. The bishop who then occupied an Apostolic see (*i. e.* presided over a Church in which an Apostle was reputed to have laboured) was justly regarded as a successor of that Apostle, and it was presumed, not altogether without reason, that he and the Church over which he presided retained a store of genuine Apostolic tradition. The question of the grace of orders still did not enter into the notion of succession. And this early notion of succession is not now antiquated, as many suppose. It is illustrated in the claim of the Bishop of Rome. He is a successor of St. Peter, with all that this can be taken to imply, not because he has been ordained by the previous possessor of that see in a direct sacramental succession, but simply because he is enthroned in it. The infallibility of the Pope, and any other distinction which he claims above other bishops, is not imparted to him by ordination but inheres in the see and office which he in turn comes to occupy. It would seem as if this reasonable conception might in some fashion be applied to the episcopal office generally. It is really applicable, and it might be acceptable to many who cannot accept the doctrine that the bishop in his ordination receives sacramentally a special *charisma veritatis*.

The importance of the "historic" episcopate lies not merely in the fact that the office may be traced back to a

very early time, but also in the fact that in the course of history there have accreted to it associations which, if sometimes they are derogatory to the name of bishop, are more commonly to its advantage. It is evident that all these associations affect our estimation of the bishop, and that, without the colour which they give, the bare name of the office would not carry the prestige which actually it does bestow. If it is important to have in every community a center of unity, this could hardly be found in any personage but one that bears the name of a bishop. But it is evident that he who is to fulfil this function must be a bishop in every sense which any Christian can reasonably require. For this reason, as I have remarked, the Methodist bishop cannot serve as a center of unity for Catholic Christians. He does not claim to be a bishop in the sense which they count essential. For this same reason it would be vain to invent a new office and a new title to take the place of the office and title of bishop and to fulfil the functions which the bishop historically has fulfilled. It is possible to *imagine* that numerous prophets might arise amongst us and gain general recognition as the authoritative spokesmen of Christendom. They would as a matter of course take the place of the bishops who two millenniums ago took *their* place. Or if we had a number of martyrs and confessors, the same lofty estimation might attach to them which in the second and third centuries made them as eminent as bishops and enabled them to perform in several respects the same rôle, for they were regarded as a touchstone for determining the genuineness of a Church or of its individual members. The martyr is an instructive example of the authority inhering in the *recognized* Christian as such. For the martyr assumed to excommunicate and to receive

back into the communion of the Church; and his judgment was likely to prevail because men reckoned that whosoever was in communion with the martyr (the exemplary Christian) must indeed be in communion with the Church.

We are not likely to find enough martyrs in our day to supplant all the bishops. But this instance of the authority of the martyrs instructs us that it is not alone official standing in the Church and it is not only ordination that singles out an individual for recognition as an exemplary Christian. Every Christian, precisely in the measure that he is generally recognized as such, may serve as a center of unity. But the light of most of us does not shine very far, and only the central person in the community can perform this function for all. It is to be noted that the bishop meets this need and fulfils this function, not by reason of his consecration, but as a consequence of his *position*. The *authority* which he can exercise in this respect is not bestowed upon him by canons, neither ought it to be limited or abrogated by them. There is a great deal said about the advantages of a "constitutional episcopate", but it is not the legal or constitutional episcopate I have here in mind. This idea seems to me no more reasonable than that of the constitutional martyr. It is certain, at all events, that there was no constitutional episcopate in the Apostles' time nor for a long time thereafter. For reasons which I have stated in a previous chapter, I deprecate the attribution to the bishop of a *legal* authority; but the same reasons forbid the application of law to restrict the exercise of the spiritual authority which the bishop enjoys by reason of his character, his name, and his position in Christendom. However that may be, it is clear that the several

denominational constitutions which variously limit the bishop's authority were not devised with a view to the functions which he might perform as a uniting factor in a divided Christendom, and it is not reasonable to expect that all the separated Christians who might rally around the bishop would be pleased with the particular provisions which the "Episcopalians", for example, have seen fit to enact with a view to rendering their bishops innocuous and impotent. The Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whether in the definition of the bishop's authority or in any other matter whatsoever, are not commonly meant to apply beyond the limits of that denomination. They are not supposed to represent the will of God but the will of the people. For this reason "Episcopalians" are not inclined to find fault with the Orthodox Churches or the Roman for making different rules with regard to their bishops, — unless they are moved (more by passion than by logic) to denounce the Roman Church for keeping the bishops subservient to the Pope instead of to a General Convention. Inasmuch therefore as no plan of reunion assumes that other sects, by reason of their recognition of "Episcopal" or any other sort of bishops, are to be absorbed in this or that denomination, it is deceptive to hold out the bishop as a symbol of unity and . . . tie a string to him. It is only as a bishop in the Church of God — *i. e.* as a bishop *simpliciter* — that he can be a center of unity for the whole Church: as an "Episcopal" bishop he cannot be. The bishop who cannot act as he is moved by the Holy Ghost, who before recognizing a fellow-Christians and bestowing recognition upon him, must refer the matter to the General Convention, ceases to be a representative person in Christendom, a personal exemplar of Christianity, and

is merged in the machinery of the legislative body. In this way reunion is as impracticable as if it were in the hands of a Congregational Council or a Presbyterian General Assembly. If the bishop is to serve other denominations beside his own, he must be freed from many trammels. It becomes evident here that the dictum, No *law* in the Church, does not mean anarchy or the abolition of authority. We must deal trenchantly with this matter, for there is no point where Christians can unite except about the bishop. Any one that desires reunion but will not accept the episcopate desires reunion without really *willing* it; for one cannot effectively will the end without willing the means.

The foregoing appreciation of the episcopate, while it will fall short of satisfying the "Catholic", will doubtless seem extravagant to many others. There are two obstacles to a just appreciation of the singularity of the bishop's office: one is St. Cyprian's theory of the episcopate; the other, that of St. Jerome.

Cyprian affirmed that all bishops hold the authority of the episcopate, and ultimately the authority of Peter, *in solidum*. The term is a legal one and applies to the tenure of property by a club or corporation. This theory was meant to justify Cyprian's claim to a parity of authority with the Bishop of Rome. If he had been in Stephen's place, bishop of an Apostolic see, instead of being merely bishop of Carthage, it is not likely that he would have lit upon such a notion. It implies that the bishops constitute a *college* and that one of them can no more act alone with full authority than a single stockholder can dispose of the common property of the corporation. But the notion of a college was utterly alien to the primitive Church. Cyprian could not perceive this, nor could his

antagonist in Rome; for in the third century the Apostles were commonly thought of as a college. It was to the collegiate authority of the Apostles that the ecclesiastical order was referred. But, historically, the Apostles did not constitute a college. The missionary function which gave them their name kept them apart. After the first days in Jerusalem they no more constituted a "company" (in this world) than the prophets (whether of the Old or the New Testament) constituted a "fellowship". The case of the prophets is instructive. If any one can conceive of the prophets meeting together to pool their opinions, it will not be difficult to imagine the Apostles holding a committee meeting. But the prophets had no *opinions*, they had only revelations. And what was true of the higher ministry was in a measure true of the most primitive bishops. Their ministry was bestowed directly by God upon each one of them severally. So St. Paul says to the bishops which met him at Ephesus (Acts 20: 28): "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God". There was no office in the early Church which had not that independence which derives from direct dependence upon God. And Cyprian himself did not suffer this theory of his to hamper his independence, for he had behind him a tradition of episcopal authority which ran another way. And it is not *his* theory that I am here most interested in combatting.

I have rather in mind Jerome's dictum that the episcopate originally (and therefore essentially) was no more than the dignity of presidency in the college of elders. These are not Jerome's phrases, but they accurately express his thought. I put the matter in this form in order to reveal the same anachronism which we have detected

in Cyprian. It was natural for Jerome to think of the elders in the primitive Church as constituting a college, for in his time the presbyterate was actually organized as a *collegium*.

St. Jerome's theory has contributed more than any other factor to obscure the original conception of the episcopate. We must recognize that it was Jerome's intention to disparage the bishop. He was a disgruntled presbyter. He had also a grudge against the deacons: his letters reveal his pique at the social prestige which they enjoyed, and he believed that the superior power accorded to them in the ecclesiastical administration (especially at Rome) was a usurpation of the rights of the presbyters. He neatly killed two birds with one stone by an interpretation of a passage in St. Paul's Epistle to Titus which pointed the deacons to a place below the presbyters and the bishop to a place but little above. We must remember too that Jerome lived three hundred years later than the period he is commenting upon and that he shows no understanding of the radical transformation which the episcopate underwent two hundred years before his time. If Jerome had made his affirmation without citing any proofs, it would have been immeasurably more imposing, for we might have reason to suspect that he was relying upon traditions which are no longer accessible to us. In respect to tradition he was more favourably situated than we, who are many centuries further removed from the Apostolic age. But this presumption in his favour falls to the ground when we note that (with one exception which we shall notice later) he has no traditional proofs to offer, but only exegetical proofs. That is to say, he speaks with precisely the same authority as a modern interpreter of the Scripture. If today we accept his opinion, it can only

be because we accept his interpretation of the texts which he cites in support of it; and we cannot reject it unless we can find a better interpretation for *all* the passages in the New Testament which refer to bishops or presbyters (1).

What I wish to establish at this point is simply the fact that the *authority* of St. Jerome, which has long imposed upon us, is not really imposing, that he does not even claim an independent authority, but only such authority as belongs to a commentator. Even as a commentator he was in a less favourable position than we, inasmuch as he was left to interpret these Scriptural passages without the illumination that is shed upon the offices of bishop, deacon and presbyter by documents of the early part of the second century which have lately come to light, and which were certainly relegated to the rubbish heap long before Jerome's day. These documents, particularly the *Didache* and the Sources of the *Apostolic Church Order*, furnish hints which compel us to re-examine the New Testament passages upon which Jerome founded his theory. Therefore, to say that Jerome stood nearer than we to the period upon which he comments is to say nothing at all to the point.

St. Jerome's famous statement in his Commentary on the first chapter of the Epistle to Titus is as follows: "Presbyter and bishop is the same thing, and the Churches were governed by a council of presbyters until the devil stirred up religious faction and the people began to say, 'i am of Paul, I of Apollos, but I of Cephas'. But

(1) Jerome in his comment upon Tit. 1: 5, 7 cites in proof of his position Phil. 1: 1; Acts 20: 28; Heb. 13: 17; 1 Pet. 5: 1; and in his letter to Evangelus, he cites in addition 1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 John 1; and 3 John 1.

when it came to such a pass that each accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to him, not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world that *one* should be elected from among the presbyters and placed over the others, and that all the responsibility for the Church should rest upon him, in order that the seeds of schism might be extirpated Hence, as we shall show, among the ancients, presbyters and bishops were the same, but gradually, that the weeds of dissension might be eradicated, all responsibility was devolved upon *one*. Therefore, as the presbyters know that it is by ecclesiastical custom they are subjected to those who are placed in authority over them, so should the bishops know that it is rather by custom than by the truth of the Lord's institution that they are superior to the presbyters, and they ought to govern the Church in common with them, imitating Moses, who, when he had it in his power to rule alone over the people of Israel, elected seventy, along with whom he judged the people ”.

There is evidently some inconsistency between the notion that the unique authority of the episcopate was “gradually” developed and the other notion that it was “decreed throughout the whole world”. Rothe supposes that such a decree actually emanated from a council of the Apostles about the year 70; and this is likely Jerome's idea, for he clearly refers to the dissensions at Corinth which St. Paul deals with in 1 Cor. 1: 11-15. The idea of a council of the Apostles is as unhistorical as that of a primitive council of presbyters; but as this will not be generally admitted I can lay no weight here upon this radical criticism of Jerome's statement. I may remark, however, that if this is what Jerome meant, he did not mean to impugn the *jure divino* authority of the regime

which he found established in his time. A custom which originated in a universal decree of the Apostles did not lack divine authority even if it could not boast the supreme sanction of Christ's institution. Jerome here marks a distinction which he himself could not regard as making an essential difference; for to him, as to all his contemporaries, Apostolic institution meant divine institution. When we note further that he attributes to the episcopate in the very first stadium of its development the exclusive powers which were possessed by the bishops of the fifth century ("the whole responsibility for the Church") it is clearly unreasonable to regard this theory as a "challenge" of episcopal authority. Had it been so regarded in his own day it must have met with violent opposition. But on the contrary, as Lightfoot remarks (1), "Of his contemporaries and successors, Chrysostom, Pelagius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theoderet, all acknowledge it. Thus in every one of the extant commentaries on the epistles containing the crucial passages, whether in Greek or Latin, before the close of the fifth century, this identity (of bishop and presbyter) is acknowledged. In the succeeding ages bishops and popes accept the verdict of St. Jerome without question. Even as late as the mediaeval period, at the beginning of the Reformation, the justice of his criticism or the sanction of his name carries the general suffrage of theologians" (2).

All this seems very impressive to us, for an opinion which we suppose to be in conflict with the strong prepossessions of Jerome's contemporaries and is yet accepted

(1) Jerome's dictus was inserted in the *Corpus Juris: Decr. pars. I., dist. 95, c. 5.*

(2) *Com. on Phil. p. 99.*

by all must, we judge, have compelling reasons to recommend it. In fact his exegesis of the New Testament passages in question is very plausible. We err, however, when we imagine that his theory conflicted with the hierarchical views of the fifth century. On the contrary, it fell in aptly with a trend of the time and seemed to furnish a happy justification of it. The position of the presbyters with relation both to the bishop and to the deacons had for a long time been an ambiguous one. The name of elder was a name of honour from the earliest time — so honourable, indeed that Apostles could speak of themselves as fellow-elders — and the position of the elders in the Church was a distinguished one. They *sat* at the Lord's Table alongside of the bishop, while the deacons, as their special ministry required, *stood*. Nevertheless (as later I shall endeavour to show) the position of elder was not precisely enough defined to be accounted an *office* until the early years of the second century. Bishops and deacons, on the other hand, were from the very first elected and ordained to a particular office, and in the absence of the higher charismatic ministry (Apostles, prophets, teachers) they, as the only officers present, had the whole executive administration of the Church in their hands. Moreover, the functions which the deacons performed outside the assembly brought them into close and intimate contact with the bishop. Elders as such were not ordained at the first, and until about the time of Ignatius they were hardly even appointed to their place. At any rate, they had only a name and a *place* in the Church, not a definite ministry. St. Clement in his Epistle to the Corinthians (c. 40) makes a comparison between the Christian ministry and the Jewish hierarchy in terms which take account of the vague-

ness of the presbyter's functions: "For unto the high-priest his proper ministrations have been appointed, and to the priests their proper *place* is appointed, and upon the levites their proper services are laid". He has in mind the Eucharistic celebration, where the bishop had in fact the administration of worship (λειτουργία) and the deacons their precise function of *service*, whereas the elders had nothing more definite than a *place*. Even when the presbyters came to be appointed or ordained their functions were at first hardly more precise. Hence we hear nothing of the activity of individual presbyters. The individual was merged in the group. So that even after the radical development which brought the presbyters forward into the position of parochial pastors it was not to be thought of that they could act alone, and as late as the third century, in Rome at least, the rule prescribed that there should be two presbyters in every Church (*bini per ecclesias*).

But in the age of St. Jerome this stadium in the development of the presbyterate was long past and forgotten. The presbyters then were everywhere performing the functions of independent parochial pastors. That is to say, they had taken over the principal function which the bishop originally performed. When Jerome in his letter to Evangelus asks the rhetorical question, "For what is there except ordination that the bishop does and the presbyter cannot do?" he gives us an exact measure of the immense prestige and authority which the presbyters had attained. Yet the whole administration of the charities of the Church was still in the hands of the deacons as the bishop's helpers, and this close association with the bishop gave the deacons a practical advantage. It had until lately been the tradition to elect the bishop from

their number, and in Rome the number of deacons was limited to seven, in imitation of the Seven who were appointed to help the Apostles in the early days at Jerusalem (1). In the middle of the third century the presbyters of the Roman Church were six times as numerous as the deacons, and by the fifth century the disproportion must have grown far greater. That of itself was enough to give the deacons an advantage. And yet the presbyters held a position which every one felt to be more honourable, and Jerome supplied from the Scripture a welcome justification for the estimate in which they were actually held. The superiority of the presbyters had been legally settled by the Council of Nicaea. By that time the presbyters were organized as the collegiate council of the bishop, which included the deacons also, and the suburban bishops, who ranked hardly higher than the metropolitan presbyters. The Roman College of Cardinals is today the only survival of the third century presbytery.

(1) As Rome was organized in fourteen regions, the seven deacons were not sufficient to manage the charitable distribution in all of them. There were fourteen diaconal churches, and seven subdeacons were accordingly created to fill the gap, and as these again were limited to seven, while the needs of so populous a city required many more ministers of this kind, the acolytes (literally, followers) were invented to eke out the number. The letter which the Roman bishop Cornelius addressed in the year 250 to Fabius of Antioch (*Eus. H. L. VI. 43: 11*), gives the number of deacons and subdeacons in the Church in Rome as seven for each order, that of the presbyters as 44, while of the acolytes there were 42, which would be three for each region. The subdiaconate was later introduced into the East; but as the Eastern Churches had no symbolical scruple about limiting the number of the deacons there was no real need for them, and the acolytes were never accepted.

But the timeliness of Jerome's theory is most clearly shown when we note that the revolution which brought the presbyters to power was in no respect so marked as in the fact that it devolved upon them the function of celebrating the Eucharist. This was the sacrifice *par excellence*, and it had come to be thought that the priesthood consisted essentially in the power and authority to offer this sacrifice. This notion of priesthood which originally was applied to the bishop had now to be extended to the presbyters, and this immensely increased their importance. Practically, it was still the deacon that stood in the closer relation to the bishop, but theoretically it was the presbyter, for he shared the same priesthood. The writer whom we call Ambrosiaster anticipated Jerome in the affirmation of the substantial identity of presbyter and bishop. In his commentary on 1 Tim. 3 : 8 he said only what must have seemed to his contemporaries self-evident : " After the bishop, however, comes the ordination of the deacon (*i. e.* without anything being said by St. Paul about the ordination of presbyters). Why ? unless it be that the ordination of bishop and presbyter is one ? For each is a priest, but the bishop is first : as every bishop is a presbyter, but not every presbyter a bishop ". Here we have substantially the interpretation that Jerome gives, but without his malice and distortion (1).

(1) Jerome deals with the same problem in his letter to Evangelus, but is less accurate in his statement. He says : " Because in the bishop the presbyter too is included. That is not true. Presbyter was the more generic name, as Ambrosiaster perceived. It should be observed that neither author justifies the Protestant notion ostensibly based on their authority, that presbyter and bishop were simply different *names* for the same office.

Besides his Scriptural proof, St. Jerome has only one historical proof to allege in favor of his affirmation of the substantial identity of presbyter and bishop. It is the case of the Church in Alexandria. In his letter to Evangelus he says: "For at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist down to the bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always placed in a higher rank one whom they elected from their own number and named him bishop, as an army would elect its general, or as the deacons elect one of their own number whose zeal they know and call him archdeacon".

We have other reasons for believing that Alexandria at the beginning of the third century furnished an example of the survival of curious customs which a century earlier had been common. Eutychius, himself Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, reports that the number of presbyters at Alexandria was limited to twelve, — doubtless in view of the symbolical consideration that the presbyters represented the Apostles as the bishop represented Christ. He declares moreover that up to the date of the Council of Nicaea, in the days of the Patriarch Alexander, it was the custom for these twelve presbyters to elect one of their number as bishop (patriarch is the title he uses by anachronism), whom the remaining eleven ordained by the imposition of their hands. This last statement might be doubted were it not that two authors of the fourth century, Ambrosiaster and the anonymous author of *Questiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (quaest. 101, referring as usual to 1 Tim.) compell us to recognize that the presbyters of Alexandria preserved a very peculiar privilege and lead us to suspect (in spite of their corrupt text and possibly their faulty information) that this consisted in the right to ordain their own bishop. St. Jerome

could make no capital of this fact (if indeed he knew of it), for in referring to this case he assumes that the bishop alone is competent to ordain. He was not so revolutionary in his ideas as many have supposed. His notion of legitimate ordination was ruled by the maxim which Ambrosiaster affirms: "For no one can impart what he has not received". The case of Alexandria, therefore furnishes him only with a proof of the general affirmation that presbyters are hardly inferior to bishops. In Alexandria the limitation of the number of presbyters to twelve naturally gave them an unusual power and prestige, such as the seven deacons enjoyed in Rome for the same reason.

It is not idle curiosity which prompts us to search after some explanation of the peculiar case of Alexandria. No theory of early Christian organization which simply ignores this problem or leaves it entirely unsolved can claim to be completely satisfactory. But this search necessarily leads us back beyond the days of St. Jerome and even as far as the second century. This is the century to which we have to refer frequently for light upon the problems of Church organization and worship. It sheds its light in two directions, backwards and forwards: both upon the problems of the Apostolic age which was just ended, and upon the Catholic development which was just beginning.

But it is almost useless to refer to the second century for light upon any question so long as all are taught to regard it as a period wrapped in the profoundest obscurity. The Protestants are interested in making this affirmation because they are unwilling to accept its testimony about the episcopate and about Church worship in general. They do not like the light which it casts upon the Apos-

tolic age, and therefore they prefer to study that age without any light. Catholics, on the other hand, are inclined to thrust aside its testimony because it reveals a state of affairs which does not correspond in all respects with the complete Catholic development of the fourth century. To them its light is an *ignus fatuus*. They dispose of each separate document by saying that it represents an exceptional point of view if not an heretical community. But in this way they dispose of *all* of them. It is not strange that customs of the second century seem "strange" when we compare them with customs of the fourth century. In this comparison the customs of the Apostolic age would seem stranger still. The Church organization which St. Ignatius depicts looks very strange in comparison with that of the fourth century. But for all that, the "strange" customs of the second century may be concordant with one another and by no means "exceptional" for their time. Any theory of Church government which finds itself embarrassed by the documents of the second century is self-condemned.

We must protest against the fiction of the obscurity of the second century. It was undoubtedly the critical age of Church development. Old things were passing away, and the new were not yet definitely formed. It is natural therefore that this period should present us with more puzzles than any other. But if we cannot solve these puzzles we must renounce the effort to trace the development of ecclesiastical institutions back to their *origins*. We are left then with the old contrast unreconciled. On the one hand is Primitive Christianity; on the other, the Catholic Church. Between them there is a great gulf fixed — the second century — and unless we can bridge that we can neither reconcile them nor understand them.

As a matter of fact the second century gives a clear enough account of itself in the matter especially of Church worship and government; for a great part of the literary remains of that period consists of regulations about Church order. As I have said, we can minimize the importance of each of these documents in turn by asserting that it represents a local or even a sectarian tendency. But by this process we discount them *all* and affirm our resolution to live in the dark.

The *Didache* has been discredited as a peculiar document, yet it furnished the light by which we see that at the beginning of the second century bishops and deacons were the only office-bearers in the Church apart from the higher ministry of prophets and teachers; that the functions of the bishop were exactly defined by the part he had in the Eucharistic celebration; and that on account of the eminence the bishops enjoyed as presidents of the Eucharistic assembly they were destined to take the place of the higher ministry which was vanishing.

The epistles of St. Ignatius were for a long time rejected by Protestants because they exalt the office of the bishop; and it is doubtful if Catholics would have accepted them with a good grace had they recognized clearly that they testify to a pre-Catholic stadium of Church development in which the presbyters performed none of the functions of the priesthood, — notwithstanding the fact that Ignatius dignified them by a comparison with the Apostles.

Catholics agree in rejecting or explaining away the four accounts we have of the "peculiar" constitution of the Church in Alexandria. No writer in England or America seems inclined to take any serious account of the *Canons of Hippolytus* or of the two second century sources of *The Apostolic Church Order* which Adolf Harnack has brought to light.

And yet, "strange" as some of these documents are, they unite in furnishing us with a consistent picture of Church organization in the second century, which, though it does not coincide with the final Catholic development, evidently explains it; though it does not tally exactly with the organization of the Apostolic age, evidently grows out of it. When we neglect all these sources of information we shut our eyes to pretty much all the light there is about Church organization in the second century, and it is not wonderful then that this seems an obscure subject, and that all who are not writing to prove some thesis of their own are sceptical of reaching any secure and concordant results in the matter of early Church organization.

It would seem as if Hatch had done enough to demolish the myth of the original identity of presbyter and bishop, as if Harnack's improvement on Hatch's theory of the origin of the episcopate were a sure basis for progress in this study, and as if Sohm's substantial structure built upon this foundation and in the end accepted by Harnack must be accepted by all as the resolution of the chief problems that have tormented and divided us. Or else we would expect that some one would controvert these theories and point out their defects. Nothing of the kind has happened. In England and America during the last twenty years hardly any one has referred to these striking generalizations or to the documents upon which they are founded. No one at all has taken the pains to refute them, but no one pays them any attention. In America no one writes at all on this subject, although it is generally believed to represent the crux of the problem of reunion. In England, one reprints his own work of thirty-four years ago, another sees nothing better to do than to return to the theory of Lightfoot, and others stray off in various directions.

This condition of affairs compels me to rehearse at greater length than I desire to do, the conclusions which I presented in a book published nearly twenty years ago, and also to bolster them up with an amount of argument which swells this chapter to a disproportionate size. I have said several times and emphatically that I do not consider the form of Church government one of the most important problems of Church unity. Yet this is by far the longest chapter of the book, and it is four times as long as the chapter on Faith and Love, which really is the topic of greatest importance. But many *do* consider Church government the first and most important problem of reunion, and it needs many words to convince them of their error. Moreover, questions about Church government are continually being bandied back and forth, the question of episcopacy in particular; and they will continue to be fertile topics of dispute until they are resolved. Therefore, though I do not expect that a discussion such as this will have any *positive* tendency to bring about a concordant regiment for distracted Christendom, I see clearly that the failure to resolve these questions is one of the greatest obstacles to reunion. For, as things now are, every sect has some justification for retaining the fond belief that its own way is as good as any other, or at least no worse; and many would be ready to welcome an entirely novel organization for the universal Church, if only it were in keeping with our present political philosophy.

I am hoping — it may be presumptuously — that the considerations here following may be found acceptable to some as a solution of problems which have long vexed us. Here, the positions I maintain I have sought to formulate more clearly than I did in my earlier work; but

on the other hand space is lacking here for marshalling all the proofs which might be brought together to support them, and for these proofs I am compelled to refer to my book on *The Church and its Organization*, especially pp. 266-402.

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians (1: 1) speaks of "the bishops, and deacons" as if they were the only officers in the local church. So also does St. Clement in his Epistle to the Corinthians at the end of the first century, and so also does the *Didache*. Source B of the *Apostolic Church Order* in the latter part of the second century knows of no other offices in the Church but the episcopate and the diaconate, and the same thing is true of the *Syrian Didaskalia* which is a third century source of the *Apostolical Constitutions*. This last instance is the more significant because the fourth century interpolator has introduced over and over again the word *presbyter* in what was then the customary place between deacon and bishop. This agrees with the fact that Source B of the *Apostolic Church Order* proposes to faithful deacons the prospect of becoming, not presbyters, but bishops (§ 6): "For they that have well performed the diaconal ministry may gain for themselves the pastoral place".

All of these sources unite in defining the functions of the bishops and deacons with reference to their part in the celebration of the Eucharist. The bishop presided at the Eucharist. He offered the Eucharistic prayer, — that is, he blessed the elements in Christ's place. He also received and offered the gifts, and for that reason it was left to him to distribute them, not as an economic officer of a corporation, but as God's steward, as priest. He had the whole administration of Church property in his hands, and in that ministration the deacons were his helpers,

just as they were his helpers in the administration of the Sacrament. St. Paul's reference to the bishops and deacons at Philippi is in line with this, if we explain this solitary mention of them by the fact that it was from them he had received the substantial aid for which he gives thanks in this epistle.

If there were but two sorts of officers in the Church (apart from the higher charismatic ministry which disappeared early in the second century), we have no difficulty in responding to the query of Ambrosiaster and Jerome. Why does St. Paul give instruction about the ordination of bishops and deacons while he says nothing about the ordination of elders? Simply because elders were not ordained, were not office-bearers in the stricter sense, had no definite ministry to perform, but had a *place* of honour in the Eucharistic assembly. If this be the correct answer, the Pastoral Epistles evidently fall into line with the second century documents just referred to and with Phil. 1: 1, which is the earliest mention we have of bishops and deacons.

But what, then, about the presbyters? For evidently there were such persons. They are mentioned both in the New Testament and in the second century sources, and with them the bishop is frequently classed. How are we to account for the usage which often conjoined the words bishop and deacon, and also bishop and presbyter, but never presbyter and deacon, and only in the Ignatian epistles joins the three together? Evidently the name of elder (presbyter) was a title of honour in the Christian communities. The common Protestant solution that elder and bishop were simply different names for the same office cannot claim St. Jerome as its sponser, as we have already seen, and neither does it do justice to all the passages in the New Testament.

At first sight it may seem a trivial consideration that during the period we have here in mind deacons and presbyters were never spoken of together except when the writer had in mind all "those who are about the altar", that is to say, bishop, presbyters and deacons. But this consideration must appear significant when we reflect that to us it is far more natural to associate the deacons with the presbyters than with the bishop. To us the deacon is simply an immature presbyter. In the view of the early Church, however, he was rather an immature bishop. But in spite of that difference in point of view it seems very strange that presbyters and deacons are not frequently mentioned in conjunction, if both names were titles of offices in the early Church. We may add that if elder and bishop were simply interchangeable titles for the same office, we might expect to find elders and deacons mentioned together as commonly as bishops and deacons. There is still another peculiarity which deserves attention: the word bishop, though it is often used in the plural, is also used more frequently and very significantly in the singular; whereas the word elder is never used in the singular except when it is applied to an Apostle. Except in this application we never hear of *an elder*, and *the elder* is an expression of which we have no example in the whole range of early Christian literature. On the other hand, we have example in the New Testament not only of the phrase "a bishop" but also of "the bishop" (1 Tim. 3: 1, 2), and these phrases are the usual ones throughout the whole of the early period. It would seem from this usage that the bishop was an officer *unique* in his own place, and that the elders not only were more numerous but did not stand out and act as individuals.

All this is explained if we suppose that the word elder

did not denote an office but merely a class in the community and a position of honour which was naturally accorded to men of greater age and riper Christian experience. It would be natural that the deacons should be more often contrasted than associated with these elder men; for in view of the special service which was required of them the deacons were chosen from among the younger men. It was not required of the deacon, as it was of the bishop (1 Tim. 3: 6), that he must be "no neophyte". The bishop was necessarily chosen from among the older men, the group of honourables in the community, from among "the first fruits" of the Apostolic mission, for his most specific function was that of *presiding*. This must have been the rule until the deacons remedied the defect of youth and became old enough to be bishops. They were the persons most clearly indicated for that office, for they best knew its duties by reason of their working association with the bishop. From this point of view, however, it is perfectly natural that the bishop was commonly mentioned along with the elders and even included among them (as were also the Apostles), for he was chosen from their number and he sat in the midst of them at the Lord's Table.

This explanation goes *almost* far enough to satisfy all the facts which are presented to us in the Pastoral Epistles. The First Epistle to Timothy deals in the third chapter with the *offices* in the Church, mentioning only the bishop and deacons, and concluding (3: 15) with the statement that this is the Apostle's instruction about the order which is to be observed in the Church as God's house. Nothing is said of elders in connection with the offices of the Church. They are not mentioned before the fifth chapter, which contains counsel about Timothy's conduct

towards the individual members of the community. The natural classes in the community are distinguished as "old men" (elders) and "young men", "old women" and "young women". The injunction in verse 19 that no accusation is to be received against an elder except on the testimony of two or three witnesses does not raise the least presumption that the elders were regarded as officers (as though they were accorded a sort of benefit of clergy), for the requirement of two or three witnesses was the rule prescribed for all cases by the Lord himself (Mt 18: 16) in conformity with the Jewish law; and in verse 1 the significance of the injunction not to rebuke an elder but to exhort him as a father is made clear by the following phrase, "and the younger men as brethren".

In this chapter, however, there are certain individuals singled out from among the older women in general and from among the older men. These individuals were to receive special "honour". The word "honour" is used in the New Testament and in the second century literature to denote a share of the gifts which were presented at the Eucharist. Those who received the alms of the Church were thus conceived to be honoured, whether it was their service which prompted the gift or their need. The bishops shared this honour with the Apostles, but also with the poor. In particular there were certain women who needed to be thus honoured. They were the widows of the Church, but not all widows. They are described as "widows indeed" (such as are really bereaved of support), and the marks which ought to distinguish them are recited at length. There were also among the older men some who were to be accounted elders indeed, who, doubtless chiefly on account of their need, were to be supported by the Church. These were to "be counted worthy

of double honour", *i. e.* of a double portion of the gifts, such as fell to the share of the bishop. But again, as in the case of the old women, it was necessary to distinguish. Not all elders needed or deserved such help, and it was not easy to specify which ought to be thus honoured. They are described vaguely as "the elders that preside well", *i. e.* such as perform well the functions that belong to their age and place⁽¹⁾. What functions? The writer is unable to define exactly the functions which an elder might be expected to perform, but it occurs to him that an elder indeed who has an honoured place with the bishop at the Lord's Table ought to be able to teach the younger people; therefore he adds, "*especially* those that labour in the word and in teaching". "*Especialy*"! The indication is still a vague one. Not these alone, but only "*especially*" these. All the elders who were zealous about their duties could not be expected to teach: they did not all have a capacity for it, and besides there were other ways by which they might serve the Church. Therefore beside the elders who instructed the younger there might be others who might be accounted worthy of support, *i. e.* of the honour which belongs to an elder indeed. Who? The writer cannot say precisely. He is able to describe only by general phrases the class he has in mind,

(1) The word *καλῶς* is to be compared with *ἐν σπουδῇ* in Rom. 12: 8. The verb does not imply anything so definite as *ruling*. In Titus 3: 8, 14 it means simply "to be occupied" (as with good works). In 1 Tim. 3: 4, 5, 12 it means "to take care of" one's own household, as the bishop is expected "to take care of the Church of God". The bishop was a leader in the Church but not a *ruler* over it, and still less were the elders expected to *rule*. No such word as *rule* or *ruler* is used of any office in the Church.

and this for the simple reason that "the elders who preside well" were in fact an indefinite class. There was no formal and outward mark which distinctly characterized the elders. Even those elders who are characterized as presiding well were not officers, they were not *appointed* to an office, but might be included in a list of the beneficiaries of the Church. The name presbyter was not an official title, and hence this name did not suffice to define the class of persons in question.

The bishops were in some sense included among "the elders who preside well": they too received a portion of the offerings, and indeed a double portion. But the elders who presided at the Lord's Table were more numerous than the bishops and their number was not definitely defined. Hence the vagueness of all these expressions that refer to them.

But we have to note, in apparent contradiction to what has just been said, that there were also *appointed* elders. We read in the Acts of the Apostles (14: 23) that Paul and Barnabas, returning from their first missionary journey and revisiting the Churches which they had planted, "appointed for them *elders* in every Church, praying with fasting". Prayer with fasting implies that this act of appointment was ordination. In Acts 20: 17, 28 we have mention of "elders" of the Church of Ephesus who were "appointed" (ἔθετο) by the Holy Ghost (*i. e.* by prophecy) to shepherd (ποιμαίνειν) the Church of God. In the Epistle to Titus the evangelist is told to "appoint elders in every city", and the qualifications for such appointees turn out to be very different from those required of the elders-indeed (1: 5, 6).

The apparent contradiction which we note here is at once resolved when we read further on (*vv.* 7-9) that

these qualifications are necessary "because *the bishop* must be blameless, as God's steward". It is clear that the "appointment" of the elders is not an appointment to the office of elder (presbyter) but to the office of bishop. We find the same thing in the second passage cited above from the Acts of the Apostles, which reads in full: "The Holy Ghost hath appointed you (the Ephesian elders) bishops, to shepherd the Church of God". The election of an elder (through prophecy with the assent of the Church) is an election not to the presbyterate but to the episcopate. Accordingly we are compelled to interpret the earlier passage in the Acts (14: 23) in the same sense, as referring to the appointment and ordination of elders to the office of bishop.

In the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians we find the same situation even more clearly set forth. The elders, like the young men and the women, are thought of merely as a natural class in the community. Honour is due them. But to the "leaders", who are distinguished from the elders, obedience is due (c. 1). The leaders whom the writer has in view are more particularly the bishops. Chapter 44 urges that the bishops ought not without due cause to be displaced from their office, and then exclaims: "Happy are those elders who have gone before, seeing that their departure was fruitful and ripe, for they had no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed place". Chapter 54 has a similar expression: "Let the flock of Christ be at peace with the *appointed* elders". Who are these appointed elders? The elders in general are a natural class in the community: they are no more appointed than are the young men or the women. The appointed elders must be a smaller class within the general group. Obviously the bishops are meant, for the bish-

ops are appointed (1 Clem. 42: 4; 44: 2, 3) and are at the same time reckoned among the elders from whose ranks they are chosen. The elders who by specific appointment are called to a definite official station are the bishops.

This explanation of the character and position of the "elders" fits all of the New Testament passages which make mention of this name, except a few which clearly refer to Jewish-Christian communities where, we may suppose, the Greek word *episcopos* was not in use, so that there was no title more definite than elder to bestow upon the men who were appointed to preside at the Eucharist and hence administer the affairs of the Church. 1 Pet. 5: 1, 2 ascribed to the "elders" functions which plainly imply an official standing. Not only did they receive a salary, but they occupied a position which might tempt them to "lord it over" the Church. It is evident that they were bishops in fact if not in name. It looks as if St. James were thinking of official persons when he says (5: 14): "Is any sick, let him send for the elders of the Church". It is very plausible to suppose that the Jewish-Christians had a nomenclature of their own, as they had many customs which were not shared by the Gentile Churches. This suspicion is substantiated by the fact that in the Church at Jerusalem (the mother Church and the model for all the Jewish-Christians of the dispersion) there was a group of "elders" that stood in close relation with the Apostles. They seem to have had the economic management of the Church in their hands, for the gifts which were collected among the Gentile Churches for the relief of the brethren that dwelt in Judea were sent "to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11: 30). All the other instances in which they are mentioned (Acts 15: 2, 6, 22, 23; 16: 4; 21: 18) represent them

as quite distinct from the other members of the community and acting as a body. There is no hint, however, that a Jerusalem elder acted individually, as did the bishop. But it is evident that at Jerusalem, so long as several Apostles were commonly resident there, the elders had no chance to rise to individual eminence. The formal name for this group was not simply "elders" but "the elder brethren" (Acts 15: 23). They seem to have performed much the same economic function as did the Seven of an earlier day, and these elders may have been a continuation of this earlier institution. The Seven were chosen from among the young men, but they had had time to grow old. We must recognize that the situation at Jerusalem was peculiar in many respects. Those who had known the Lord in the days of his flesh or were witnesses of his resurrection must have enjoyed a marked distinction in the community. They lacked nothing to make them Apostles except the call to go out as missionaries. St. James the brother of the Lord was accorded both the name and the authority of an Apostle although he did not leave Jerusalem. It would have been an ineptitude to call St. James a bishop, for he enjoyed an authority incomparably greater than that of the bishops of the first century or even of the second. There was no place for bishops in Jerusalem so long as several Apostles were habitually resident there. This Church, moreover, retained its peculiar character even after Jerusalem was destroyed and it was obliged to migrate. For several generations it was presided over by kinsmen of the Lord. This institution has been likened to the Moslem califate. The notion is that the early disciples accepted James as the visible head of the whole Church just as an uncle of the Prophet was recognized as the head of Islam. And

it is indeed obvious that St. James who presided over the Apostles was not regarded as their *successor* but as the direct representative of the Lord. Being such, he must have been regarded not as a parochial officer, the pastor of a particular local Church, but as head of the Church universal. Ritschl believed that he discovered in this a peculiar Jewish-Christian conception of the episcopate, — which he found illustrated also in the Church in Alexandria, where the twelve presbyters evidently represented the Apostles and the bishop must have been regarded as taking the place of Christ. Ritschl distinguishes this idea of the bishop as the successor of Christ from the Catholic idea that he is a successor of the Apostles, and this latter notion he strangely enough associates with St. Ignatius. As a matter of fact Ignatius invariably likens the presbyters to the Apostles, and the bishop he likens to Christ or to God the Father, and the thought of *succession* had no place in this range of ideas. We may suppose that it was equally foreign to the Church in Jerusalem. James, like the bishop of Alexandria, simply occupied the *place* of Christ, -- but this was precisely the conception of Ignatius, and it was the conception which ruled the whole development of the Catholic episcopate in the second century. There are not two conflicting ideas here, but only one idea which influenced the whole Church. The analogy which Ignatius dwells upon was influential enough in Alexandria to restrict the number of presbyters to twelve, while in Jerusalem it was more pragmatically illustrated by the selection of a kinsman of the Lord to fill the place which elsewhere a mere bishop would fill. But Ritschl is correct in thinking that one who occupies Christ's place cannot be regarded as an officer merely of a local Church. St. James was cer-

tainly not so regarded, but neither was the Ignatian bishop. According to the primitive view there was no such thing as a local Church. Every company of Chritians assembled together with Christ was the whole Church, a manifestation of Christendom. The question was the same in every assembly of the Church (whether at Jerusalem, at Alexandria, or at Antioch): Who shall sit in Christ's place at the Eucharistic Table? who is most worthy to bless the bread and wine in his stead? It is not at all a question about the *name* of an office, but about a position which had to be occupied and a function which had to be performed. Obviously the most eminent Christian in the assembly must occupy that place. If an Apostle were present and only one, the choice was easy. If there were several Apostles, as at Jerusalem, another criterion must govern the choice, — as, for example, blood relationship with the Lord. In the same way a prophet or a gifted teacher, even if he were merely a visitor, would naturally be accorded the place of honour. But in case no such persons were present some one must be chosen by the community to fill this place, for the Lord's Supper was not an extraordinary event which could be postponed to await the coming of an Apostle or prophet, but it represented a constantly recurring need of the community. To fill this place one had no need of extraordinary gifts; it was only necessary that he be an exemplary Christian, highly esteemed in the community, and ready to labour in behalf of the Church.

But this place at the Lord's Table was the highest formal distinction in Christendom. Whosoever occupied it, whether it were an Apostle or a mere bishop, must be regarded as occupying the place of Christ. And when the prophets and teachers were about to vanish from the

scene the bishops were their natural substitutes *in this function* because they had always performed it in the absence of the higher ministry. This position which would confer honour even upon an Apostle could not but exalt the office of the bishop. But until the higher ministry disappeared the bishops could not claim a *right* to this position of presidency: it was merely a privilege which was commonly accorded to them. And though the *place* was unique and an individual possessor of it naturally indicated, a plurality of bishops even in a single congregation might not have been embarrassing so long as the Church felt that it was effectively governed by a higher ministry. We do not know certainly whether there was a plurality of bishops in a single congregation. Several expressions in the New Testament seem to imply it. But it is possible that at Philippi and at Corinth there were several congregations, over each of which a bishop presided. Such seems to have been the case in Rome in the second century. At all events the logic of the situation prevailed. After the first century we know of no instance where two bishops shared the office of presidency in the same assembly, and before long the principle was established that there might be but one bishop in a city. The office of bishop in itself must sometimes have been an occasion of jealousy and dissension, and this must have been acute if there were superfluous bishops to be eliminated. Feasts have always been an occasion for marking distinctions of rank, and the numerous references in the Gospels to jealousy about precedence at table were probably not recorded without a pungent application to dissensions in the Church which arose out of this same question.

Conflicts about the bishop's office did in fact arise, —

that is, about the place of presidency at the Lord's table. Such was the emergency which led St. Clement of Rome to intervene at Corinth, where the "bishops who had blamelessly offered the gifts" (*i. e.* the oblations at the Eucharist) had been thrust from their place by younger men. But disputes about the "chief seats" (or about the "chief-seaters", as Hermas calls them) were more likely to arise with respect to the presbyters' places, for the reason that the presbyters were not formally appointed to an office but simply accorded by common consent the honour of occupying the seats on either side of the president at the head of the Table. In the most primitive time, when the disciples were *all* seated at the common Table at the Lord's Supper, the group which enjoyed the honour of the chief seats was not sharply distinguished, for there was no separation between those who were above and those who were below the salt. But this primitive custom could not be maintained in places where Christians became numerous. It seems, indeed, to have persisted in Rome (and doubtless not there alone) well into the second century; but this was only in family groups which were met to commemorate their dead in the cemeteries. In the principal assembly it must have become impossible, even during the Apostolic age, for the multitude of believers to sit around a common table. Yet a table there must be, and also some one must sit at it along with the president. There could be no question who ought to enjoy this distinction: it was accorded as a matter of course to the elders, who already had the honour of sitting on either side of the president at the head of the Table. But perhaps not to all of them, for practical considerations set a limit to the size of the Table, and though the number of elders who there found room

might be extended to twelve, out of regard for the number of the Apostles, it is not likely that it ever exceeded that number. Hence the possibility of dissension about the chief seats. This situation gave to the elders a formal distinction which could not but lead in time to formal appointment and ordination. From the first, the elders as assessors of the bishop must have shared with him responsibility for disciplinary decisions. As president of the Eucharist the bishop had a judicial function to perform; for the discipline of the Church consisted principally in exclusion from Eucharistic communion. The elders must have a share with him in this delicate function, not merely because they sat with him at the Holy Table, but because they sat there as the *natural* representatives of the people, as the nucleus of the congregation. I emphasize the word *natural* because we must exclude the notion of representation in the political sense. The elders were not elected and deputed to represent the people, but symbolically they *were* the people. They sat at the Table because it was intolerable that the officers of the Church should sit there alone while all the people were excluded. In a sense it may be said that the elders sat there not because they held an office in the Church but because they did not. In the first instance they sat there because they were the people, though this distinction could hardly fail in the long run to win for them official honour. It must be remembered, however, that the bishop and presbyters did not sit *around* the Table, in a way which would seem to exclude the people from it, but they sat *behind* the Table, in the same position they originally occupied when they sat at the *end* of the common table, so that the people, however numerous they were, could still be thought of as assembled about the Table. This

arrangement was so manifestly appropriate that it held its own well into the middle ages. In the early basilicas the bishop's cathedra was at the middle of the half circle of the apse with the seats of the presbyters on either side and the altar immediately in front. The deacons stood by the altar as the character of their serviceable ministry required. Such to this day is the arrangement in all the Papal basilicas. The English Reformers, therefore, were returning to the early Catholic practice when they insisted upon placing the Holy Table between the clergy and the people; and if Protestants and Catholics are ever to be united it can only be by returning to that practice.

“Those at the altar”, was the summary expression used in the second century to describe the whole group of bishop, presbyters and deacons. To us that means the clergy as *contrasted* with the people; but according to the early view this was the Church symbolically represented. From this point of view “those about the altar” were justified in conducting the whole business of the Church, whether it involved election to office, a case of discipline, or the resolution of any question. They alone could express themselves individually. The assent of the multitude might be expressed by acclaim, or their dissent might be corporately expressed. But in any case, it never could be a question what the majority of the people might desire but what they discerned to be the will of God. Therefore an election (for example, to the office of bishop) was considered a *popular* election though it originated with the presbyters and was merely assented to by the people. That is not our way of thinking, but it was both primitive and Catholic.

The position of the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons at the Eucharistic Table perfectly explains to us

their functions and did in fact determine them. For this reason it is not the *name* of bishop which primarily concerns us, but the *position* which such a person occupied at the Lord's Table.

Hermas evidently writes at a time (about the middle of the second century) when the *exclusive* right of the presbyters to the chief seats was being consolidated, — that is to say, when the office was just becoming a formal one, involving formal appointment and ordination. Hermas, himself a prophet, has a vision which claims for the prophets "a seat at the left hand", and for martyrs "a seat at the right" (*Vis. III. 1: 8, 9*), that is, on either side of the bishop at the Lord's Table. But the fact that a vision was necessary to substantiate such claims proves that the Church had already passed the stage where they were freely accorded, and it is likely that Hermas the prophet never enjoyed except in a vision the privilege he demanded. "The chief seaters" (*Vis. III. 9: 7*), *i. e.* the presbyters, were already too well entrenched in their position to permit any intrusion, — even when the intruder was a prophet and brother of the bishop of Rome. It is true that a Roman document of half a century later (*Canons of Hippolytus, c. vi. 43, 44*) ordains that a martyr may be admitted as a presbyter (*i. e.* to the seats of honour) without ordination, his "confession" being counted equivalent to ordination; though for the bishop's office he must be ordained. But this hardly implies the right of *any* confessor to sit with the presbyters. It waives the requirement of ordination, but probably not that of appointment or election.

The most illuminating evidence we have of the character of the presbyter's functions is found in a document of the latter half of the second century which Harnack

calls Source A of *The Apostolic Church Order*, discriminating it from the later constituents of this third century work. The section relevant to the presbyters begins with a fanciful comparison between them and the four and twenty elders in St. John's vision. From § 1 it is evident that very small communities are contemplated, in some of which there are not found twelve men to elect a bishop. The meaning seems to be that there must be two presbyters *at least*, for the presbyters on the right and left perform different functions.

2 “(There shall be two elders), for [in St. John's vision] there are four and twenty elders, twelve on the right and twelve on the left; for they on the right receive the bowls from the archangels and offer them unto the Lord, but they on the left keep watch over the multitude of the angels. The elders must therefore be well advanced in years in the world, refraining in a seemly measure from intercourse with women, readily sharing with the brotherhood, not respecting the persons of men, fellow-initiates of the bishop and fellow-combatants, assisting him in assembling the congregation, having a willing mind towards the pastor. The elders at the right shall have a care for the bishops at the altar, in order that they [the bishops] may honour and be honoured [in the sense of sharing the gifts] as much as may be due. The elders on the left shall take care for the congregation, that it may be orderly and without disturbance, after it has first been instructed in all subjection. If any one, being admonished, answers presumptuously, those at the altar shall unite and by common counsel adjudge to such an one the meet penalty, in order that the others also may fear, lest they should have respect to any man's person and it spread like a gangrene and all be seized by it”.

Though this source describes the functions of the presbyters in the latter part of the second century, it evidently has in mind small communities (perhaps in Egypt) which had not outgrown the single assembly and the simple institutions of the primitive age. We have clear evidence that in Rome about this time, and doubtless in most of the other great centers, the situation was very much changed, for the single assembly was long outgrown, and the presbyters had to assume a more or less independent pastoral responsibility. Alexandria appears to have been the only great city which was an exception to this rule; and the peculiarity so often remarked upon there seems to resolve itself into so simple a matter as the tardy survival of a primitive custom. It appears that Alexandria, even up to the fourth century, tenaciously adhered to the primitive and early Catholic custom of maintaining *one* principal assembly which was considered, symbolically at least, as the assembly of the whole Church, in which the bishop always appeared along with the twelve presbyters. Other great Churches did not allow their development to be hampered by any such symbolical restriction of the presbyters to the number of the Apostles. Rome, for example, had many more presbyters than could conveniently be seated at the Bishop's Eucharist. There the bishop maintained his relation to the whole Church of the city by celebrating in the various parishes (the so-called "titles") in turn. And doubtless the consideration that there must be presbyters to flank him on either side was one of the reasons why *two* were appointed for every "title". These Roman presbyters, though they acquired a more or less independent position as parochial pastors, still had collectively, as a presbytery, very much the same relation to the discipline of the whole Church and the

same oversight of the bishop's administration that is described in the primitive source we have just been studying. But it is not strange that the Roman presbyters, being many, had not individually the same importance as the few presbyters of Alexandria, or that they lost sooner than they the primitive right to ordain their own bishop.

The custom of the Church in Alexandria was not peculiar in the second century; but it was an anachronism in the fourth, and to those who viewed it from the standpoint of the fifth century it seemed a great curiosity. In the eleventh century Eutychius endeavours to excuse the anomolous custom of the ordination of a bishop by his presbyters, alleging that till the fourth century there were no bishops in Egypt outside of Alexandria. But we have record of bishops in Egypt before Alexander, and Source A, if it really comes from Egypt, proves that bishops must have been peculiarly numerous there in the second century. For it prescribes that "if there are few men, and in any place there are not found twelve men capable of voting for a bishop, they shall write to neighbouring Churches where the congregations are firmly established, that three chosen men may come from thence and carefully examine who is worthy". Here election is regarded as the most important matter — or rather the *selection* of the most worthy man. Ordination must be assumed, and it must have been administered by the congregation and the three deputies. It is possible that the imposition of hands was done by a layman: it is clear that it was not necessarily done by a bishop. In the established congregation (comprising at least twelve men) the case is plainer; for no delegates from the neighbouring Churches were required, and consequently no bishop. The only alternative is that there was no ordination. That the

Church in Alexandria was an "established" congregation it need not be said. It was *the* established congregation in Egypt, and consequently there could be no question of inviting neighbouring Churches or their representatives to assist the "twelve presbyter" and the thousands of the faithful in examining, electing and ordaining their bishop. The situation at Alexandria is significant because it was not a local peculiarity, but represents, as we have reason to believe, the normal and universal custom of the Catholic Church throughout the first half of the second century. There were special reasons, as we have seen, why this custom lingered longer in Alexandria.

The situation at Alexandria helps to explain another "peculiarity" which was by no means singular to that city: I mean the strange fact that the country-bishop was held to be inferior to the city-presbyter. The last reference we have to the right of presbyters to ordain is found in Canon XIII of the Council of Ancyra (A. D. 314), where it is mentioned only to restrict it. There it is enacted that "it be not allowed to country-bishops to ordain presbyters or deacons, nor even to city-presbyters, except permission be given in each parish by the bishop in writing". This is Lightfoot's rendering (Phil. p. 232) of the commonly received text, — which Wordsworth also justifies (*Ministry of Grace*, p. 140, note) *contra* Gore (*Christian Ministry*, p. 370, note B). Here the city-presbyter is recognized as the superior of the country-bishop, though "*not even* he is any longer allowed to ordain presbyters and deacons without written permission from the bishop. We can imagine how the important presbyters of Alexandria about this time must have rebelled against Alexander's innovation of introducing one whom they must consider as no better than a country-bishop as their

superior in the matter of ordination. In the age which is represented by the *Apostolic Church Order*, with its numerous cures of less than twelve men presided over by a bishop, how impossible must it have been to subordinate the Alexandrian presbytery to a country-bishop (χωρεπίσκοπος). Lightfoot says (*ibid.* p. 232, note): "The name and office of χωρεπίσκοπος appear to be relics of the time when ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος were synonymns. While the large cities had their college of presbyters, for the villages a single πρεσβύτερος (or ἐπίσκοπος) would suffice". But from the *Apost. Ch. Ord.* we see what the *chorepiscopus* really was: he was a Catholic bishop in the strictest sense, having under him (even in the small communities here referred to) at least two presbyters and three deacons. Small as his cure was, he had all the independence of the Catholic bishop, and he lost it only as he became absorbed in the metropolitan presbytery. A very curious document of a still earlier age and belonging to Syria contemplates the case of a bishop who is served by only one deacon. Nothing at all is said of presbyters, but I imagine that this omission does not prohibit us from believing that there were elders who sat with the bishop at the Lord's Table. The fact that they are not mentioned confirms our assumption that they were not reckoned as officers. St. Paul saw fit to mention only the bishops and deacons at Philippi.

It is to be remarked that this canon of Ancyra is not only the latest evidence we have of the ordination by presbyters of *presbyters and deacons* but is also the earliest reference to such a custom. As a matter of fact this must have been a rare occurrence, for it lies in the nature of the case that the bishop would ordinarily ordain his own staff, though not without "the laying on of the hands of

the presbytery". Moreover, in the earliest time the presbyters were not ordained. The ordination of a bishop by his presbyters was a thing much more natural, so long as the maxim had not yet gained currency, that no one can pass on what he has not received.

Source A describes the functions of the elders more precisely than do the letters of St. Ignatius or any other documents of the second century. But there can be no doubt that from the very first the elders had approximately these functions to perform, for they were indicated by the *position* which such persons occupied at the Eucharist. It is monstrously unhistorical to affirm (1) that in the age of Ignatius "the presbyters, whose position and power in the community had hitherto seemed supreme were relegated to the second rank".

In fact, Ignatius betrays no desire to exalt the bishop at the expense of the presbytery. He was content with the Church organization which he found in vigour and was desirous of exalting the authority of it as a whole. The rôles which he ascribes respectively to the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons, resulted, as we have seen, from the character of the Eucharistic assembly and the positions which these persons severally occupied at the Lord's Table. If he asserted anything new, it was to the effect that the bishop as president of the Eucharistic assembly must be regarded as president of every assembly of the Church. Without the bishop's leave it is not lawful to baptize or to hold a love-feast, or do aught of the things pertaining to the Church (*Ad Smyr.* c. 8). We are in a position now to appreciate the just significance of the apparently exorbitant terms in which Ignatius

(1) As does Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 62.

speaks of the bishop and the presbytery. He has in mind the analogy which was applied to them from the earliest time and which was reflected in the place which they occupied at the Lord's Table. The bishop did in fact occupy the place of Christ, and the presbyters the place of the Apostles. In this light we can read without offence or surprise the expressions which Ignatius applies to "those about the altar".

"When ye are obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ . . . be ye obedient also to the presbytery as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope" (*Ad Trall.* c. 2), "Plainly therefore we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord himself" (*Ad Ephes.* c. 9). Ignatius, it is true, deals freely with this figure and sometimes speaks of the bishop rather as "the type of the Father". "In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being the type of the Father and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God and as the band of the Apostles" (*Ad Trall.* c. 3). The deacons are here regarded as *serving* the bishop as the Son serves the Father. "The bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, having been intrusted with the *diaconate* (*i. e.* the serviceable ministry) of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the worlds and appeared at the end of time" (*Ad Magn.* c. 6; c. 6. *Ad Smyr.* c. 8). The presbytery, at all events, is invariably compared with the Apostles, and all three orders — the bishop and the presbytery and the deacons — are commonly associated together in a way which plainly reflects their concrete relations towards one another as defined by the places occupied at the Lord's Table. When Ignatius says, "With

your reverend bishop, and with the fitly wreathed spiritual *crown* of your presbytery, and with the deacons who walk after God" (*Ad Magn.* c. 13), he seems to have in his mind's eye the half-circle of presbyters seated about the throne of the bishop, according to the arrangement which we see first in the basilicas, but which may well date back to the beginning of the second century. The half-circular arrangement of the presbyters' seats may perhaps explain also the figure of speech which Ignatius employs in *Ephs.* c. 4, where he says that the presbytery is "attuned to the bishop as the strings to a lyre".

When the growth of the Church necessitated the multiplication of places of assembly, over all of which the bishop could not preside at the same time, the presbyters were his natural surrogates, and in the measure that they acted as presidents of the Eucharistic assemblies the honour and independence of their position was increased. But inasmuch as the bishop's authority depended originally upon his performance of this function, something had now to be done to safeguard his rights in this regard. And in fact several expedients were resorted to. Not only was the bishop's cathedra established in every Church, so that the *two* presbyters who commonly ministered there might be regarded always as his deputies, but he himself appeared in one Church after another in turn, and when he was not present the presbyters were not allowed to consecrate the Eucharist till they had received particles of the consecrated bread (the so-called "leaven") sent from the Table where the bishop was presiding in person. It happens that we know of these expedients only in the case of Rome, but there is reason to suppose that some such devices were resorted to

wherever conditions were similar. It is to be noted that the alternative solution which looks so easy to us — that, namely, of creating enough bishops for every parochial assembly, — could not have appeared easy to the Christians of the second century: for to them every additional bishop implied a new presbytery, a separate and independent organization. That was not to be thought of at a time when the threat of heresy and schism prompted the Church rather to lean in the other direction, to insure unity even at the expense of sacrificing the traditional organization of every assembly.

I must call attention again to the fact that from the very beginning the position of the bishop was necessarily *unique*. Not more than *one* person at a time could preside at the Eucharist and bless the sacrament in Christ's place. No "college" of bishops or presbyters could perform this function, for it consisted in sitting in the place of Christ and doing what he did at the Last Supper. It is conceivable that the individuals belonging to a college of bishops might have performed this function in rotation. We can imagine this as an expedient for solving the problem created by a plurality of bishops, but we cannot imagine why any such problem should ever have been created. The early Church had no notions about representative government, nor had it any sort of republican or democratic principles which might prejudice it in favour of a collegiate administration. On the contrary, the notion that any man who claimed a position of leadership in the Church could do so only as the minister of God, as the vicar of Christ, made it more natural for the Church to accept the leadership of *one* man. There is in fact no clear evidence that there was ever a plurality of bishops in a single assembly, and the burden of proof

properly rests upon such as affirm that there was. In the whole range of early Christian literature we nowhere encounter such an expression as *bishops presbyters and deacons*. When used in connection with the presbytery the word bishop is always in the singular number. This does not mean that there was invariably but one bishop in every city, for such was clearly not the case; but it implies, I think, that in a place where there were several bishops there were also several assemblies as there certainly were, for example, at Rome even in Apostolic times. The terms bishop and presbytery are correlative: there was no presbytery without a bishop, but also there was no bishop without a presbytery, — though it might consist of only two presbyters and a single deacon. This was the rule until in the third century the country-bishop was incorporated in the metropolitan presbytery.

The uniqueness of the bishop's position and office is suggested by the Pastoral Epistles. 1 Tim. 3: 1, 2 speaks of "the office of a bishop" and prescribes the character which "the bishop" must have. The significance of the singular number and the definite article is all the clearer for the fact that the writer in Tit. 1: 5, 7, gives injunction to "appoint elders (plural) in every city", and then goes on to prescribe the character which must be looked for, not in elders, but in "the bishop". If bishop were merely another name for elder, we might expect the plural in the second instance as well as in the first. But evidently the function which the bishop was expected to perform implied so clearly a *single* officer that the writer felt it unnatural to continue with the use of the plural even when he had in mind a number of bishops who were to be appointed in the several cities. This peculiarity of phrase furnishes us moreover with an additional proof

that to "appoint elders" meant to make bishops, and that every *appointed* elder was *ipse facto* a bishop. It suggests also that in this passage and in Acts 14: 23 the appointment of elders "in every city" does not necessarily imply the appointment of more than *one* in each city. And although it is certain that there was a plurality of bishops (two or more) in several cities, notably in Philippi and Corinth, it is not sure that "the elders of the Church" (Acts 20: 17) who came from Ephesus to meet St. Paul at Miletus were all alike from the *city* of Ephesus. At all events, the phrase which identifies them as "bishops" (v. 18), made such by the Holy Ghost, lays stress upon their position as shepherds of the flock and thereby implies (though not coercively) the singularity of their office and authority. For it is not common for a flock to have two shepherds, and it is not natural to think of the pastoral office and authority as divided. Incidentally I would remark that it is strange for Protestants to prefer the traditional title of *pastor* and apply it to an officer whom they conceive to be created by the congregation and dependent upon it for his authority. Sheep do not choose their shepherd or confer any authority upon him. On the other hand it is ridiculous for Anglicans to eschew this lofty title in favour of the title *rector* which properly indicates no relation to the people but only to the corporation created by law to deal with the property of the Church.

Whether we prefer the word pastor or bishop or any other, the position and function of the presiding officer in the Eucharistic assembly clearly presaged the development which, insisting upon the uniqueness of the office and striving to realize the unity of the Church, ended in asserting the necessity of having but one bishop in

every city, even though this implied the devolution of the pastoral title and function upon the presbyters and necessitated a new justification of the bishop's authority (*i. e.* the third century theory of Apostolic succession) when all expedients failed to preserve intact the fiction that the bishop was still the president of every Eucharistic assembly. This revolution led to a new insistence upon the bishop's rights over ordination, for this was the only unique function still left to him. The Anglican Churches distinguish themselves from all the rest of Catholic Christendom by permitting none but bishops to confirm. That is almost a justification for the name Protestant Episcopal. St. Jerome and Ambrosiaster unite in affirming that there is nothing but ordination which a bishop may do and a presbyter may not do. That was the notion in the fifth century. So great had grown the pastoral authority of the presbyters. But the doctrine of Apostolic succession in its earliest form did successfully vindicate the uniqueness of the bishop's authority as the teacher of the Church. Later the episcopal authority became so intrenched in custom that it needed no theoretical support. The earliest theory of Apostolic succession did not long survive the second century, in which it originated. Ideally it seemed to confer less dignity upon the bishop than did the primitive view which regarded him as the vicar of Christ. But it was more concrete and pragmatic: it furnished, as the earlier and purely symbolical view did not, a vindication of the unique authority of the single bishop in his own city. It provided moreover a point of view which served to justify the pre-eminence of certain bishops over the rest, the hegemony which was conceded to the Churches which claimed to be Apostolic sees.

The early doctrine of Apostolic succession involved

no notion of a mystical infusion of Apostolic character or capacity. It was, on the contrary, wholly a common sense doctrine, founded upon a concrete assumption and advancing to a perfectly pragmatic inference. The assumption was that certain individual Apostles were the original founders, or for some time the chief pastors, of this or the other of the principal Churches of Christendom, and that the *single* authority which was represented in the person of the Apostle was perpetuated in the person of a *single* successor. This was for the most part an imaginative construction of history; and yet the first part of this assumption was manifestly true of several Churches, and even the latter part it would be difficult to impeach in the case of a few. The inference — or perhaps we had better call it an additional assumption — was to the effect that the single successor of the reputed Apostolic founder inherited with his authority also a store of Apostolic tradition. The single bishop (especially in those sees which claimed an Apostolic origin) was regarded as a repository of Apostolic tradition. The bishop as such was not an inheritor of the Apostolic charisma, but he might be in a position to inherit a store of tradition, received in a perfectly natural way, as a disciple might receive it from his master. Since the bishop's authority did not rest upon the possession of a charismatic endowment, it might be regarded as a legal authority, — and yet not merely so, for it was supposed to rest upon a real possession, upon a teaching *equipment*, though not upon a teaching faculty. The possession of Apostolic tradition was at that time regarded as the bishop's supreme title to authority, not only in the local Church but in the Church at large; for as the reputed possessor of God's word (however he came by it) his authority was as clearly an ecumenical authority as was that of the prophet.

This theory of Apostolic succession was an effective and plausible one so long as the unwritten tradition was still a lively factor in Church teaching; but its force was weakened with each succeeding generation, and we can readily understand the necessity which ultimately led to a radical modification of the earlier view, — a transformation which consisted in the fact that for the *quasi* historical assumption there was substituted a mystical theory of an episcopal *charisma veritatis* which inhered in all bishops alike, a theory of an abstract episcopate representative of the primacy of Peter which all bishops shared *in solidum*.

The earlier theory was not fitted to last long, but it actually did contribute to the establishment of the single episcopate. The expression "monarchical episcopate" is commonly used by democratic people in disparagement of the institution. That is hardly more unreasonable than to criticize on political grounds the institution of a single Saviour or of a single God. But it is somewhat ridiculous to apply this high-sounding title to the parochial episcopate revealed in the letters of Ignatius and in the other second century sources we have been considering; and Dr. Gore has good reason for preferring the term "mon-episcopacy" even for the diocesan form. But neither Gore nor Westcott can justify monepiscopacy by the later doctrine of Apostolic succession. When this doctrine is treated simply as a corollary of the doctrine of the grace of orders it has no longer the tendency to support mon-episcopacy: it is just as consistent with the presence of a thousand bishops in a city as with one. It satisfies Dr. Gore to regard the twelve presbyters of Alexandria as "bishops *in posse*", while Dr. Wordsworth welcomes the notion that they were bishops in the fullest sense and

would be content if all Presbyterian pastors would accept ordination as bishops. Any one who identifies Catholicity with valid ordination will naturally count this the foremost requisite for Church unity. But though it obviously *is* a requisite for any plan of reunion which contemplates ultimately the inclusion of all Christians, Catholic as well as Protestant, it is not well to put it first. Practically this is not expedient. For Protestants, though they will all agree that ordination is not an empty formality, and even that it conveys grace, cannot be brought to agree that the bishop is the only channel through which this sacramental grace can come. Pragmatically and historically considered, this claim in behalf of the episcopate seems to me contrary to fact. It is not a doctrine of the Anglican Church, and though it is undoubtedly a Catholic doctrine since the third century, it cannot be clearly shown that it existed in the first or second century. Early sources which we have been studying, if they do not disprove this doctrine, do at least suggest a suspicion that the practice even of the early Catholic period did not conform to it. At all events, we must acknowledge that the historical basis of the doctrine is not so secure that Protestants can be charged with stubbornness or ignorance when they decline to accept it. Professor Turner⁽¹⁾ justly emphasizes the prevalence and importance of the idea of *succession* in the early Church, and more particularly with regard to the ministry; but when he shows that one idea of succession prevailed at the end of the first century, another in the second, and quite a different one in the third, he furnishes a proof that the latest doctrine did

(1) Art. *Apostolic Succession* in *Essays on the Early History of the Church*.

not exist so long as the others prevailed and were counted sufficient. This being the state of the question, it is impossible to expect that all men can be constrained to accept the late doctrine of Apostolic succession; and just in the measure that this motive is magnified as the ground for the necessity of episcopal ordination the difficulty is increased for Protestant ministers who in the interest of reunion are asked to accept reordination. They cannot submit to it *on this ground* without implying a necessity which they do not recognize, — that is to say, without compromising the truth as they see it.

Therefore some other motive must be found for episcopal ordination. I say, *must* be found, because it is evident that we can have no common ministry without a common accord about ordination. And it is equally evident that there can be no accord except upon the basis of episcopal ordination. For a custom which has prevailed in all Catholic Churches at least since the third century is not seriously impugned by scanty hints of a different custom which may have prevailed in the second, nor by the many different modes of ordination which have been in vogue since the Protestant Reformation. Such a custom has now no need of a doctrinal theory to justify it, but a practical motive there must be to persuade all men to observe it and an immense number of Protestant ministers to submit to it.

Such a motive is suggested in the last Lambeth appeal for reunion. It is the necessity of providing some means for insuring the *recognition* of a common ministry, and the conviction that episcopal ordination is the only means for insuring the recognition of a ministry common to the whole of Christendom. That is self-evident, but it does not go far enough. I believe that the Lambeth appeal

would be more persuasive if it required more. It regards the bishop in the light of an ordaining officer exclusively, as a channel of grace, and so continues to stress the sacramental side of ordination. But there is another side to ordination. Practically considered, the laying on of hands counts also as a *verification* of a man's calling; it is not only a means of insuring validity but also an outward testimony to the effectual calling of a minister in the Church of God. Hence with a view to insuring recognition it has the same sort of importance as the other elements of election: the divine call (which is not merely an inward voice), the suffrage of the people, the consent of the fellow-clergy.

This aspect of ordination must be stressed because, of all the primitive elements of election, there is left to us only the act of the laying on of hands. For no longer in Catholic or in Protestant Churches are presbyters and deacons in any proper sense of the word *elected*. The various elements of election were for the primitive and for the early Catholic Church the most important notes of legitimacy. St. Paul lays stress upon "the prophecies which went before on" Timothy and led to his election and ordination (1 Tim. 1: 18; 4: 14), and he speaks of the "many witnesses" which confirmed his good confession (1 Tim. 4: 12). A passage already quoted from Source A of *The Apostolic Church Order* shows that the Church of the second century continued to lay the same stress upon the two primary elements of election: the indication of God's choice, and the consenting witness of the Church. It is prescribed there that "if there are few persons, and in any place there are not found twelve men capable of voting for the bishop, they shall write to neighbouring Churches where the congregations are firmly

established, that three chosen men may come from thence and carefully examine who is worthy''. We can confidently assume that the bishop elect was subsequently ordained by the laying on of hands, but that is not mentioned. The election itself was the concern of chief importance, and it consisted of two parts: an examination which aimed at discerning God's choice; and a testimony which was meant to insure recognition of the act that was there performed and of the minister who was there appointed. For it is plain that the three delegates from the neighbouring Churches were regarded as witnesses and not merely as expert examiners. The number three indicates this, for, as we have seen in several instances, this was prescribed as the minimum number for witnesses. In this same document it is required that the deacons must be three, even if there were but two presbyters, apparently because the deacons served in cases of discipline as witnesses before the bishop, as this document shows. The three delegates sent by the Church in Rome to carry St. Clement's letter to the Church in Corinth were doubtless regarded as witnesses. In this case it seems probable that they (or two of them at least) were elders of the Church, and elders evidently would be the most apt persons for such a mission. Incidentally it appears from this instance that Clement did not regard himself simply as a parochial officer. Not because he was bishop of Rome, but because he was a bishop in the Church of God, his responsibility, and therefore his authority, extended as far as Corinth, and indeed to all the Churches. It appears also from Source A that the election of a bishop was regarded as the common concern of the Church, even if it was to a diminutive see of less than twelve men (or it may be that we ought to understand this passage as meaning twelve

elders, since it was commonly the elders that elected the bishop). 1 Tim. 3: 7 requires of a candidate for the bishop's office that he "have good testimony from them that are without", — because he was the medium of communication both with the pagan community and with the other Churches.

It is to be noted that in the second century this device for insuring recognition was thought necessary only in the case of the smallest Churches which were regarded as insecurely established. In the case of "well established" Churches election in due form was accounted sufficient, without the intervention of neighbouring Churches, or even (it would seem) of a neighbouring bishop to act as consecrator. It is natural therefore that the great Church in Alexandria (with its twelve presbyters) elected and ordained its own bishop. The presumption was that each Church was securely guided by the Holy Ghost. In time, however, the prevalence of heresy weakened the force of this generous presumption, and the rule was established that in every case three bishops should intervene in the act of choosing and consecrating a bishop. It is significant that the Church in Alexandria yielded its antique privilege only at the time of the Council of Nicaea, when the presumption in its favour had been destroyed by the Arian heresy which originated in its midst. It is plausible to suppose that precisely three bishops were required because they were primarily regarded as witnesses. There can be no doubt that they were also co-consecrators. But even Cyprian thought it more important to emphasize the part they played as witnesses. In the case of Cornelius he speaks of the election by the people and "the consent of fellow-bishops" but says nothing about ordination..

Incidentally, but still with a bearing upon the subject

of *recognition*, I would call attention to the fact that in this passage which I have quoted a second time from the *Apostolic Church Order* Professor Sohmsaw a hint which leads to a true appreciation of the significance of the early Christian synod or council. If every assembly of Christians together with Christ is ideally a whole Church, an assembly of Christendom, what need is there of a synod, and what authority can it have which is lacking to a Church which has Christ in the midst of it? Sohms answer is that the synod or council has essentially no authority greater than any other Church assembly, that it has no other kind of authority, and indeed that it has no spiritual authority at all except as it *is* a Church. There were in fact no synods or councils during the first Christian century. It was not till the latter part of the second century that small local synods were held here and there to define questions of doctrine and discipline. This is the date of the early source which informs us of the custom of *strengthening* an insecure Church by sending to it approved men from neighbouring Churches, when there occurred such an emergency as the election of a bishop. We have seen that these men were regarded as witnesses and that their presence served to insure recognition of the act which was there performed and of the bishop who was there elected. But we must guard ourselves against the notion which comes so naturally to us, that these men entering the Church in question were regarded as *outsiders*, as though they represented the interests of other Churches. The Quakers could teach us how the early Christians must have regarded delegates from another meeting. For, in fact, the early time knew no such thing as separate Churches. A Christian visiting another meeting was taken to be as much a member of it as anybody else, though

he might be visiting it for the first time. The deputies, therefore, who visited another Church to assist in the election of the bishop, thoroughly coalesced in it; there was not the Church *and* the deputies, but simply a Church of God. Yet through the presence of these deputies it became a little synod. In the face of greater emergencies, such as a threat of schism or heresy, it is natural that greater synods should be held, that to strengthen a local Church already strong there should come delegates from many Churches. But again these delegates did not come to represent and carry through particular interests of their several local Churches, neither were they there to add weight by their collective wisdom to the counsel of God that was to be revealed there. They met there not strictly as delegates from local Churches, for the idea of a separate and local Church did not yet exist: they met simply as Christians, and they constituted simply a Church. Practically, their presence there was valuable chiefly as a witness, to bear testimony that this was really a Church, a meeting with God's Spirit, to insure that this would be commonly recognized and that the decisions of such a Church would be accepted as the will of God. All this is very remote from our way of thinking, yet this view may commend itself to us because it accounts for the fact that so little concern was shown to make even the ecumenical councils *representative* in the political sense.

But to return to the question of election and ordination.

In the third century we find the same emphasis upon the necessity of a double witness to the fitness of a candidate for the ministry which we noted in the second century sources: *i. e.* the witness of God as revealed in the Church after prayer and fasting; and the witness of man to the fitness of the person thus chosen. The latter

was necessary to insure recognition — recognition, that is to say, of the fact that the Church had really chosen according to God's will. On the occasion of the Novatianist schism St. Cyprian enumerates in favour of Cornelius: the divine choice, the popular suffrage, and the consent of fellow-bishops (1). "The consent of fellow-bishops" implies that Cornelius was ordained by three bishops, according to the rule, as was Novatian himself (Euseb. *H. E.* 6: 43); but Cyprian passes over this. Evidently, election and consent were from his point of view factors of greater importance than ordination for legitimating the position of the new bishop of Rome. This is characteristic of the early age. Precisely those elements of election which we have generally discarded (if not for the bishop, at least for the presbyter) were accounted then the most essential. One who had merely received the laying on of hands, without a popular election and without the consent of fellow-bishops, would not have been regarded as a bishop at all. There was no Church of which he was bishop — in modern phrase, he had no jurisdiction; and without jurisdiction a bishop was unthinkable. The early Church did not discriminate between a *potestas ordinis* and a *potestas jurisdictionis*. The Lambeth proposal in making this discrimination ignores that aspect of the bishop's authority which the early Church counted most important and which is indeed most characteristic of that office. When St. Jerome affirms that ordination is the only act exclusively reserved to the bishop he is thinking of sacramental functions that could be definitely defined, and he

(1) *Factus est autem Cornelius episcopus de Dei et Christi ejus judicio* (*Epist.* 5: 55); *Post divinum judicium, post populi suffragium, post coepiscoporum consensum* (*Epist.* 59).

assumes that even the earliest bishops had "the whole responsibility of the Church" upon their shoulders. What I have written in this chapter — this long disquisition upon the Christian ministry — is written chiefly with a view to confirm this notion of Jerome's, that the bishop must be expected to bear the whole responsibility of the Church, and to suggest that the unity which for a long while was preserved in the Church by the recognition of this broad responsibility and authority of the bishop can be restored again by this same means.

It is not enough to recognize the bishop as a fit instrument for ordination. It is true enough that every one is ready to recognize his competence in this matter. But that is only one side of the "recognition" which is required for the establishment of a common ministry. How is the bishop for his part to recognize the persons whom he ordains as being able ministers of the New Covenant? If the Lambeth proposal does not permit the bishop to examine and judge the persons who apply to him for reordination, the episcopal recognition of these persons amounts to no more than a certificate of valid orders. That is not enough of an assurance for people who require of their pastors that they be ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

It may be said that this is only a beginning. I say, it is a poor beginning which does not recognize even the bishops as God's ministers in any full and ample sense, but regards them merely as channels of grace. And this beginning is followed by a bad ending, if after ordination the bishop has no supervision over the ministers whom he has recognized. Even if his recognition of them in the first instance carried weight, it would not avail after a certain lapse of time to assure any one that these same

persons had not subsequently fallen into evil ways or into grievous heresy. If he is to serve as a symbol of unity for the Church at large, the bishop must be regarded not only as an apt instrument for ordination but as the representative of Christendom, as the *persona* of the community, the touchstone of genuine Christianity.

But how can the bishop claim this exalted position, and how can the people be expected to accord it to him freely, if there is no evidence that he was made bishop "by the judgment of God and his Christ", after divine guidance sought and obtained, after a popular vote and the consent of fellow-bishops, in short, if he was simply appointed to office either by a civil or an ecclesiastical authority? It must also be taken into account in the event of any general reunion that a bishop, even if he was elected by popular suffrage in one particular denomination, was not then elected by the whole Church which ultimately comes into being, nor with any prevision that he might become effectively the bishop of the whole community. That would not invalidate his authority; but manifestly it would require humility, on the part of persons who had no voice in his election, to accept him as *their* bishop; and to the bishop it ought to suggest a spirit of meekness, with a resolution to serve the Church and not to "lord it over God's heritage".

In the last resort, the Catholic bishop must be recognized as the center of Christian fellowship, not on the ground of his personal superiority, or because he is in fact the most eminent Christian in his city, but simply because he is *there*, as the only person who has recognition in a broad sphere and might attain it throughout the whole community. This is a consideration well adapted to prompt humility in the bishop. Doubtless the attainment

of unity would be immensely facilitated under a bishop who is justly the object of universal reverence, and under an unworthy or a narrow bishop it probably could not be attained at all. For if all are to be persuaded to obey the bishop, it must be possible to regard him as God's minister, not merely as the minister of a particular Church. And it is obviously absurd to expect all to obey him, if obedience to him means obedience to the denominational laws which define his authority and jurisdiction. The bishop, if he is to serve at all as a center of unity for a divided Christendom, must be untrammelled by denominational law so far as regards the authority which naturally belongs to him as the most eminent minister of God. It is clear here that when I plead for a Church without law I am not contemplating a Church without authority. The recognition of God's authority in the Church is not an approach to anarchy.

It is very clear that no Church in Christendom can now boast that it reproduces, in form or in spirit, the organization which prevailed either in primitive or in early Catholic times. The call to unite under a common ministry does not therefore imply the surrender of one denomination to another or the universal adoption of any one of the forms of organization now established. Just as plainly it cannot be taken to involve a return to the primitive forms of organization which were already outgrown in the second century. And in the foregoing sketch of the development of early Catholic institutions I do not propose a model which must be slavishly followed. It does seem to me, however, that the spirit which informed this whole development is today as worthy to prevail as ever it was. I have tried therefore to throw into relief those elements of early Church order which most clearly

reveal the spirit of Christianity. If I have correctly apprehended the spirit of that time, it follows that the later institutions of Catholicism in a measure obscure it, and that the Protestant forms of Church organization are uncongenial to it. But the full grown Catholicism of the fourth and fifth centuries is so complete in its logical legality and so imposing that without prodigious effort we are unable to pierce behind it and discover the existence of ecclesiastical institutions which for all their similarity in form were informed by another spirit. The earlier age is not in itself obscure, but we have difficulty in focussing our eye upon it, — for the same reason that a picture sketched on a diaphanous screen will effectually hide from us everything that lies behind it.

Although the early order of the Church cannot be precisely reproduced and ought not to be slavishly imitated, it seems as if the mere amalgamation of our Protestant and Catholic Churches might result in an approximation to it which neither Catholic nor Protestant could find fault with. If the ruling-elders of the Presbyterian Churches and the vestrymen of the "Episcopal" Churches were to take their seats on either side of the pastor at the Lord's Table and were normally to perform, outside the meeting as well as within it, the functions implied by that position, and if in addition to them the deacons of the Independent Churches were to stand beside the altar, then (assuming that the Eucharist were again treated as the chief and constantly recurring expression of Christian worship) we should have approximately the parochial organization of the early time, without prejudice to the position of the bishop as successor (*effectively*) of the unifying ministry of Apostles, prophets, and teachers.

I conclude with an expression of the hope that in a

united Church the parochial pastors might again be *elected*, and elected normally from among the members of the community in which they are to serve. By various pretexts we contrive to disguise from ourselves that presbyters and deacons are no longer in any part of Christendom really elected to their ministry. Bishops alone are *sometimes* elected, and they not freely, for they must be chosen from the number of those who have already *elected themselves* to the presbyterate. For though all Churches have their precise legal rules for the presentation, probation, and admission of candidates, and though such rules constitute the bulk of all the canons of the "Episcopal" Church, there is, as a matter of fact, no real call and election to the ministry. The individual congregations may be asked to testify to the fitness of a candidate who presents himself in their midst; but this duty is naturally performed in a perfunctory way so long as they have no fear that such persons might be appointed to serve *them*. For the selection of their own pastors the choice is restricted to the presbyters who are already ordained. That is to say, election to the ministry, both in Catholic and Protestant Churches, is a fiction.

It is not in any antiquarian interest that I bewail so great a defection from the early custom of the Church. We have rejected the two elements of election which seemed most essential to the early age: the objective call of God, and the witness of the people. Yet it would be impertinent to make this complaint if there were no possibility of reform, or if all were content with such a ministry as we obtain by our methods of recruiting it, — if we had ministers enough and of the right sort, and if the ministry were accordingly held in honour. The opportunity of reform in this respect may be presented by the reunion of the divided Churches and the thorough-

going readjustments which that must involve. So far as I can see, there exists but one serious obstacle to such a reform, namely, the opinion that God's ministers must be trained in a theological seminary. To me it seems doubtful if that is the only way or the best way to insure a learned ministry. It can hardly be affirmed that we have attained by this means the desired end, that our ministry is now sufficiently learned, or even that it is superior in intellectual training and general instruction to the leading laymen in the Churches. It is evident that no congregation will elect from their midst and for their own service men who for three years must be immured in seminaries before they can be of the least use to it; and when they have only to certify to the fitness of persons who after a long period of preparation are to serve in *other* congregations they are not likely to be scrupulous in their scrutiny. But if they could elect their own ministers from their own number, or freely choose them from among the Christian men in their community, it is not doubtful that they would be inclined to elect the best, and the best men would hardly close their ears to the clear call of such an election. It does not seem to me preposterous to imagine that the congregations under the guidance of their bishop, and with assistance when they needed it from other Churches, might elect their own deacons, who after a long period of service, which itself would present opportunity for learning, might "gain to themselves a good degree", the pastoral place. At all events I see no other way but this to bridge the present deplorable gap between the people and the clergy and to abolish the spirit of clericalism which is created by the artificial conditions of theological training. Until something like this is done, all efforts to imitate the organization of the early Church can only result in a travesty.

CHAPTER VIII

UNITY IN FAITH AND LOVE

To write many chapters about the problem of Church unity and devote none of them expressly to the subject of faith would seem absurd. It would be so indeed. Yet I had rather omit this chapter than be bound to set down here the precise propositions upon which we must be agreed before we can be united. I do not feel competent to do this, nor, to my mind, would it be a useful thing to do.

The factor of faith has not been neglected in the preceding six chapters. It is fundamental to the idea of the Church, implicit in prayer, expressed in all the parts of common worship, and in the Eucharist it is as it were incarnated. In such pragmatic ways our faith is most adequately and most persuasively expressed.

And now when I come to speak more expressly of faith I am fain to link this word with love, lest I might seem to attach undue importance to the definitions of faith, or to suggest, by treating of faith by itself, that it can (except in the form of devil's faith) exist apart from works of love.

Along with faith and love I would speak also of hope,

— as St. Paul does. Hope expresses the *direction* of our faith. It is important to speak of it in this present connection because it is, as St. Paul (Ephes. 4: 4) rightly reckons it, one of the prime bonds of union: “One body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”. This great quality we have thrust into the background, hardly conceding it any longer a place in the supreme trio, “Faith, Hope, Love” (1 Cor. 13: 13). Some wonder even if hope be a specifically Christian trait. They cherish the delusion that Christianity realizes all that the Jews hoped for, so that we ought no longer to hope but simply to enjoy. But St. Paul counted hope so specific a trait of the Christian that he distinguishes the Gentiles as people “having no hope” (Ephes. 2: 12). He counted it so important a factor in salvation that he can say (Rom. 8: 24), “By hope we are saved”; and the mere suggestion that the distinctive Christian hope might prove fallacious makes him cry out, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable” (1 Cor. 15: 19). When we have suffered this hope to fade, our faith is perverted, for it has lost its orientation. A retrospective faith, though it be founded upon the surest facts and developed with infallible logic, is not the Christian faith.

Personally I feel keenly the importance of hope as a bond of unity. I find a singular pleasure in consorting with persons whom I can hope to meet again in the Kingdom of God. This is a consideration which cuts sheer across denominational lines. I have no reasonable expectation of seeing in the Kingdom of God all who worship with me in the same Church, whereas I have that assurance with respect to many who are now separ-

ated from me by denominational barriers. They are Roman Catholics, let us say, or Presbyterians, while I am an "Episcopalian". But to my feeling, the fact that we are "called in one hope of our calling" — not predestinated merely but *called*, and with some evident signs of our calling upon us — establishes a profound bond of union. Under the spell of this sentiment — or I might say more coldly, as a logical deduction from this consideration — denominational discriminations seem utterly irrelevant to the Church of God. For discriminations which are not pertinent to the Church triumphant are a scandal and an ineptitude in the Church militant. I cannot but regard as "fellow-members of the Body" those whom I account "fellow-heirs and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (Ephes. 3: 6).

Hope is a subjective attitude of mind; love, even more plainly, is a subjective disposition; and if faith cannot be regarded as a subjective quality, St. Paul uses the word incongruously in the familiar sequence, "faith, hope, and love". Faith is first of all a subjective experience, before ever it expresses itself as a faith or as *the* faith. It may remain to the end implicit, as the faith we have in persons commonly does; and it is not made essentially greater when it is expressed in numerous disjunctive propositions. Jesus detected "great faith" in a Roman centurian who could not define his belief in him more adequately than by recognizing that he had some sort of spiritual authority (Mt. 8: 9, 10). And when Jesus chid his disciples for their "little faith" he was certainly not complaining that they had too few beliefs, but rather that they lacked trust in God (Mt 6: 30). Faith is the opposite of fear (Mk 4: 40).

Faith is characteristically the expression of a *personal* relationship; it is inspired by personal contacts, and our Christian faith in particular is inspired only by contact with Jesus, either direct or mediated. "The faith once delivered" is another matter: it is something to be believed, and it will not be believed unless we first have faith.

Our faith now is too *little* to unite us, — not because it falls short of the full extension that is desirable, but because it is not intensive enough. A man may believe all the articles of the Christian creed and yet have little faith; on the other hand he may have few articles of belief and yet have a great faith.

Faith in the subjective sense is not the disposition to believe *anything* (credulity), nor the capacity claimed by the White Queen in "Alice" to shut one's eyes and believe fifty impossible things in a minute (superstition): it is rather the tendency to credit the loftiest truths that are proposed to us about God and the world, and to entertain the highest hopes. The New Testament association of faith with hope and love is of high importance as an instruction about faith, because it fixes its place in a definite range of experience. Psychologically considered, faith belongs coherently to the affirmative attitude of mind, along with trust, confidence, courage, hope, and love. The opposite attitude corresponds to the opposite range of experience: unbelief, distrust, fear, hopelessness, and hatred. Faith and hatred therefore belong to opposite attitudes of mind and cannot coexist, any more than can confidence and fear. On the other hand, faith and love not only coexist in the same line of experience but are mutually confirmatory. Faith naturally issues in works of love. If it does not do so it betrays itself as mere belief,

such as the devils also have while they tremble (Jame 2: 19). When we get behind the words which Paul and James differed about we find that these Apostles agree, not in disparaging faith in comparison with love and its works but in subordinating faith to love as the end which it aims after.

Not love only but Christian faith and hope also normally issue in works of mercy. This is a proper expression of faith, but it is a remoter expression. Faith has its own special object and its appropriate modes of expression. Though it is first of all a subjective experience, it is never merely that. Hope also has its special object and its appropriate modes of expression, and so too has love. Love has for its object a person, and it expresses itself in the endeavour to do him good. The Christian hope has for its object a future life of blessedness, and it expresses itself poetically in apocalyptic visions and in songs of the heavenly country. Christian faith has for its object God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ and experienced in the Holy Spirit, and a common and appropriate expression of faith is the formulation of articles of belief. This expression of a man's faith is capable of indefinite expansion in the form of a creed which defines the nature of God and his relation to the world. Properly speaking it is not our creed that saves us, but our faith. But no intelligent man (I mean this in the sense that all normal human beings are intelligent) can remain altogether without a formulation of his beliefs or disbeliefs. The danger lies in making the creed the object of faith, which is a species of idolatry.

But it is questionable whether we do not attach undue importance to a formal creed as a unifying factor in the Church. It is clear now that we have been deluded in the

expectation that an elaborately formulated confession of faith legally imposed would insure identity of belief within a particular denomination. The Churches of the Calvinistic tradition furnish a notable instance of the failure of "confessions" to accomplish this purpose. For no other Churches, not even the Roman, were ever so determined to prescribe in their confessions a rigidly coherent system of belief; and yet today in most of the Reformed Churches both pastor and people would be resentful of the assumption that they hold the Calvinistic theology. For the beliefs which they now hold they have commonly no expression in a creed. The old confession is still in being and is the only ostensible indication of the differentia of the denomination, — that is, of the things which are supposed to distinguish it from other denominations. But, like Giant Pope in the Pilgrim's Progress, the old confession is toothless and confined to its cave.

We have to note on the other hand that the early Church got along very well throughout the first century without any legal definition of its beliefs and contrived to maintain unity of faith in spite of the rapid growth of the body and the most heterogenous accretions to its membership.

We have not yet taken to heart that lesson. And yet the Protestant Churches have learned this much, that we ought not to exact (or, at all events, that we cannot exact) of the membership of the denominations (exclusive of the clergy) anything more than the essential things which every Christian ought to know and to believe for his soul's health. And the effort to formulate a confession in this sense will tend to result in a *common* creed. Even now it cannot be claimed that differences of creed are a substantial barrier to the reunion of Protestant

denominations, inasmuch as we are proposing union now only with such as profess themselves "orthodox". With the others we can have no concern except the duty of converting them. The attempt to include Unitarians in a scheme of reunion is perfectly vain so long as they stand so far apart from the traditional position of Christendom that they can find no sufficient reason for calling Jesus the Christ. It is nowadays counted uncivil to deny the name of Christian to any who care to claim it. And indeed it is to be taken as a touching homage to Christianity that many who stand remote from its traditions are eager to claim that name. At the same time it is a clear contradiction in terms to repudiate the title of Christ and to claim the name of a Christian. With such persons we could come to a better understanding were they to call themselves the disciples of Jesus, and in the measure that they truly are such we must feel ourselves really united with them — though not united in the Church of Christ.

As a baptismal formula or for liturgical use the "orthodox" denominations are generally (if not universally) disposed to accept the "Apostles' Creed" and the "Nicene", — if only for the reason that the common acceptance of any more modern formula is inconceivable. The so-called Apostles' Creed was formulated in Rome early in the second century in view of a heresy which threatens us no longer. For this reason it stresses, as we do not need to stress, the proofs of Jesus' humanity. And yet it is not inept in our day, and all the Churches of the West will readily accept it as their baptismal confession, which is the purpose for which it was originally formulated. There may not be so ready an agreement about the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. And

yet it is evident that the denominations which claim to be orthodox would stultify this claim by refusing to use a creed which is the fundamental definition of the orthodox faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ. This creed fortunately is not embarrassed by the equivocal term "person". And it is not pertinent to object that the term "substance" connotes a philosophy which is no longer ours (assuming that we have a philosophy); for the intention of the phrase, "one substance with the Father", is sufficiently clear to all, whatever be our notion of *being*. And no change in philosophy can alter in the least the significance of the affirmation that Christ (the Logos) was "not created", or its precious implication that the salvation of the world was not an afterthought of the Creator.

Inevitably the doubt will arise whether all who agree to use these creeds really agree in believing what they affirm. But this is a searching of hearts (namely, of other peoples' hearts) which carries us beyond the question of creeds to a region where legislative enactments and legal agreements have no application. And this is a doubt which does not so much concern the relations of one denomination with another as it does the unity of belief within each several denomination. For today the most substantial lines of cleavage in matters of belief run clean athwart the denominational lines. The distinction between conservative and radical reveals the irrelevance of denominational divisions which are the "dead hand" of the past. Yet the denominational divisions are *divisions*, whereas the deeper distinctions between conservative and radical are as yet only *distinctions*. I suppose that no one would deliberately choose to change these distinctions into divisions. Yet this is the result that would be brought

about by the anxious effort to add to the fundamental creeds more and more definitions with the intent of leaving no room for diversities of interpretation. The futility of this has been made sufficiently evident by experience, — if we had no other reason for withholding our hand from supporting the tottering Ark of the Lord.

But we have another and a very strong reason in the consideration that law, if it is inept in any application to the Church, is most clearly inept when it is applied to personal belief. It is most unlovely in this application. The primitive rule favoured the presumption that one who claims to speak in the name of Jesus actually does speak by his Spirit, and the simplest confession — merely the utterance of the Name, Lord Jesus — was deemed sufficient to establish this presumption (1 Cor. 12: 3). But on the other hand the spiritual *people* were able to “try the spirits” even of the prophets and were exhorted to do so (1 Jn 4: 1). This proved in fact a sufficient safeguard of the truth.

But a sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If a minister of the Gospel claims legal rights in the Church, he cannot justly complain if the Church (the collectivity) exercises a legal control over him and the rights which it confers upon him. If he claims authority for his word or even barely the right to be heard in the Church, and claims this on legal grounds — on the ground, namely, that he has been legally ordained, inducted, or installed — it becomes necessary to define, as over against his rights, the legal rights of the people. Either we must vindicate to the people the right of rebellion on due occasion, or we must legally confer upon them the right of the referendum and recall. This, in fact, though no law sanctions it, is a right so generally exercised by the people that

the rights legally conferred upon the priest are hardly worth considering. Though in the Church considered simply as such there can be no legal compulsion either upon priest or people, yet in the Church legally organized as a denomination which confers privileges upon condition of a particular performance it is as reasonable to define and enforce such conditions as it is to define and assert these privileges. Nor would there be any ambiguity in this case if it were clearly understood that the status of a Christian man or of an office-bearer *in his denomination* does not necessarily define his status in the Church of God.

In the Church of God there can be no exercise of legal authority in matters of belief.

The Bible is an "orthodox book", yet one will not find in the New Testament a more ample confession of faith than, "that Jesus Christ is Lord". The full Christian faith, however, is expressed or implied in all the Apostolic Epistles, and the expression of it there is all the more impressive because it is not defined with care as if it were a thing still needing to be learned, but is assumed as already the common possession of all. The liturgical benediction, "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ", is clearly a Trinitarian formula for the reason that it expects from Christ what only God can give. I get from Weizsäcker the suggestion that the confession "Christ is Lord" (1 Cor. 12: 3) was a liturgical formula with which the prophets prefaced their discourses.

Some are now inclined to urge that, ignoring the historical experience of the Church, we return to this simple formula as the sole and sufficient expression of the Christian faith. This suggestion justly arouses suspicion because

there is obviously no reason for urging it except the desire to escape from a fuller confession of the Christian faith, — and that is not the reason why the Apostolic age was content with it.

But if we attach due weight to the words, this is in fact the whole faith. We do not escape from the Christian faith when we formulate it in these brief terms: we do not necessarily minimize the faith when we express it in a nutshell. Fix your eyes upon this proposition and it opens out all sides, becomes a world to you, the *whole* faith. The word "Christ" is so familiar to us as a part of the proper name of Jesus that we must make an effort to realize the significance of it as a title. Only in the earliest preaching to men who were still unbelievers do we find the disjunctive proposition, "Jesus is the Christ". Such a proposition by its very form suggests the possibility of contradiction: one can retort, he is not. But in the Church, at a time earlier at least than the earliest epistles of St. Paul (which is the same as to say, the earliest documents of the New Testament) this affirmation was no longer made. The only expression henceforth in use was "Jesus Christ" (or "Christ Jesus"), which assumed as beyond contradiction, as the most sure acquit of faith and experience, what the earlier phrase didactically affirmed. Formally, this admits of no denial, for it opens no question: it would be inept to rejoin, He is not. Likewise the still commoner expression, "The Lord Jesus Christ", was not a profession of faith but an incidental revelation of faith.

This leads us to the consideration that the *Credo*, the definite affirmation of belief, while it is a natural and a proper expression of faith, is not its only expression and may not be the most adequate or the most persuasive.

The faith of the Church is never so adequately expressed as when it is expressed concretely in worship and in good works. Expressed in that way it neither challenges debate nor provokes criticism but is insensibly instilled in the mind. This is a psychological consideration to which we ought to attach more weight than we do. When we find Christians praying the same prayers and singing the same hymns we need not inquire if their creeds agree. The creed itself when it is sung is more effective as a bond of peace than when it is declaimed.

If a prescribed creed is needed, it certainly need not be a long one. An article of faith which is not a necessary condition of prayer — that is, of communion with God through Christ — is not necessary to the Church.

There is in fact a pretty general agreement among Protestants that the two most ancient Catholic creeds ought to suffice as the symbol of union for the united Church. We must recognize, however, that on the part of the Orthodox Churches and the Roman a great stretch of charity is required when we ask them to tolerate this position. And we must be careful for our own sakes not to suppose that a creed summarily expressed means a little faith, that the short creed implies a denial of all that it does not affirm, — for example, that the reception of the Nicene Creed implies the rejection of the decrees of Calcedon or of the theology expressed in the Athanasian Creed. It is a great mistake to suppose that we must rest content with a minimum of faith in a reunited Church, as if the greatest common divisor of all our creeds were the utmost that we might severally be allowed to hold and to express, — or as if there were no other way to express our faith but in a creed.

The Church in its worship must contrive to express a

rich experience of faith. If the baptismal creed must be expressed in brief and simple terms to match the average or the minimum attainments of the neophytes, there are no such limitations imposed upon the expression of our worship, which ought to be an expression, not of the minimum, nor of the average, but of the loftiest attainments in faith and devotion, so that it may constitute a norm towards which the people can be led to aspire, while at the same time it truly represents the Church because it is accepted as an inspiration of the Spirit which helpeth our infirmities and teacheth us to pray as we ought.

Such an expression of our faith we already have in some measure as a common possession. First of all we have the Holy Scriptures which are read, explained, and applied in all our Churches. There would be no conflict about the Scriptures if we valued them for what they are rather than for what they are not. For manifestly they *are* “*profitable* for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness”. We misuse the Scriptures when we treat them as a storehouse of infallible texts for theological definitions. Besides this we have in common almost all of our hymns and the substance of many of our prayers. But above all we need to have in common the Liturgy. In a previous chapter we have seen how full and profound an expression of the Christian faith the Liturgy can and ought to be. This suggests an additional reason for the use of a written liturgy, that the people may have a norm of worship which represents the faith of the Church in its fulness and not merely the spiritual attainment of an individual at a particular moment. For the Lord’s Supper must always be the deepest and fullest expression of our religion, and the prayers by

which it is accompanied will justly be regarded as the clearest and most convincing expression of our faith — or of the lack of it. In conversing with Italians I have observed that their eyes are always intent to note the slightest gesture of one's hands, and that they are often more impressed by that than by the words which are uttered. We are surprised to note that the Roman Church is more inclined to interrogate our liturgy than our creeds and confessions. The Orthodox Churches have the same disconcerting habit. On reflection we must acknowledge that this is not a bad rule for discovering the faith of a people.

There is no great incentive to labour for the reunion of our separated Churches if the outcome must be a more meager expression of the faith than the individual Churches in their separation now exhibit. But, in fact, the pooling of our differences and the removal of the many denominational inhibitions ought to result in a fuller faith for all, and very certainly it would result in attaching to the expression of our common faith a greater authority.

This last is a consideration of the highest importance. Many today deplore the lack of any unifying element in the thought of our generation. The Churches cannot supply this, not because there exist no substantial elements of faith which they hold in common, but because there is no clear line of discrimination between the articles of belief which are merely the peculiarities of a denomination and such as are the expression of the faith of the whole Church. Consequently the latter are included in the general disparagement which is heaped upon the former, and there is no authority left.

When I deplore the lack of authority it is not legal

authority I have in mind, nor even moral authority. I am thinking more particularly of the lack of unifying elements of thought. This is an authority of a sort, and it is an absolute authority, regulative of all our thinking, so long as the maxims in question are commonly received as true. The lack of this sort of authority is an immense misfortune not only to the Church but to the State and to civilization as a whole. This is a misfortune which has overtaken us: we have not sought it, and I do not presume to suggest how we can extricate ourselves from our present situation. If ever we are to come to a concordant agreement, it is far more likely that we shall unite upon the one truth than upon any of the innumerable forms of error. But it is certain that individually we shall not find much truth unless we seek it as the most desirable thing in the world. And however zealous and open-eyed we are in our individual search, we cannot expect to attain by solitary quest a large comprehension of the truth. Now it is, "Every man for himself!". That is our great misfortune. For the truth is a social possession and can be attained only by the loyal co-operation of many. The hope of bettering our situation is diminished by a disposition to ignore our misfortune or even to exalt it as one of the blessings of democracy. I suppose that we are prompted to this by an amiable optimism which strives to make the best of a bad case which cannot be mended. But some are really afraid that authority might hamper progress. Anarchy of thought, however, gives no promise of progress, and from the point of view of intellectual interests our present condition is so deplorable that a tyrannical authority could hardly make it worse. But we are not confronted with any such dilemma as a choice between tyranny and anarchy. For hardly any one counts

it desirable that we should think alike upon all points. Our need would be supplied if there were a central body of accepted truth, applicable to faith and morals, from which we could start out upon adventures brave and new and to which we could make safe return when we find ourselves in danger of shipwreck. Progress is possible only when there is a *pou sto*. Scientific progress is now possible because there is a central body of scientific dogma. It is not inerrant or irreformable dogma, but for the time being it is universally accepted, and that fact insures its social utility. On the same terms we might recommend successfully our religious dogmas. But we claim too much for them, and the world petulantly rejects them *in toto*. No wonder. For we are arrogant and insolent in claiming for our religious dogmas that they are irreformable. After all, they are *our* definitions, and we are not infallible even when we are inspired. No one is presumptuous enough to claim that he apprehends the whole truth, and except in relation to the whole truth no single definition is adequate.

It is not for the sake of ecclesiastical unity only that we need a stable nucleus of thought, but for the stability of the state, but for a good understanding between the nations, but for civilization as a whole. There has never been a great and stable civilization or a really profitable intellectual movement which was not supported by a body of classical doctrine. There exists today such a body of scientific doctrine; but the scientific dogmas do not touch life deeply enough to affect favourably the constitution of human society. It would be true rather to say that they are not formulated with a view to including the phenomena of life even in its lowest manifestations. Hence the tendency to explain life away, that is, to interpret it

in terms of chemistry or mechanics. For this reason the scientific doctrines either do not affect social life and human culture in its highest ranges, or else they affect it unfavourably and obscure from us its nature and significance. On the other hand, religious dogma, whether it be true or false, really goes to the bottom of things and makes possible a coherent culture. If it were totally false, we might well prefer to let civilization go to wrack rather than prop it up with a falsehood. But if it be only relatively false, then it is also relatively true, — that is to say, it is inadequate. The greatest theologians claimed no more for their dogmas, nor, as we have remarked, do the great scientists claim more for theirs.

There is a danger that religious dogma, becoming outworn, may be felt as an obstacle to progress. But this is true also of scientific dogma. An all-too-human trait explains this fact. The mind naturally resists the intrusion of new ideas which subject it to the painful process of a general readjustment. The process is painful because it involves the necessity of *breaking down* the fabric of established associations. This reluctance and the *malaise* which prompts it presumably have a physiological basis. The process of destroying established lines of communication in the brain is probably a cause of unhappiness. This is the physiological explanation of conservatism, the natural defence of established dogma. It would seem as if this ought to be defence enough. There is no obvious reason why religious dogma needs to be imposed by law (civil or ecclesiastical), any more than scientific dogma. History proves that in the long run it is futile to attempt to support it in this way. Hysterical efforts to support the dogma by law are always made just at the moment when it is falling. It is significant that the infallibility of the

Pope was decreed at the moment when it became evident that the fabric of medieval theology could no longer be kept on its feet.

I cannot accept Papal infallibility as a fact, any more than I can accept the infallibility of the General Councils; nor do I believe that either theory will avail to sustain dogmas which have no other support. But I profoundly sympathize with the desire of the Roman Church to insure, by this or any other means, the stability of its dogma. For a concordant body of doctrine, in the very fact that it is common, and despite the consideration that it may be partly false, has a clear advantage as over against the discordant doctrines of Protestantism, which certainly cannot all of them be true.

I am disposed to think that *infallibility*, whether it be claimed for the Councils or for the Pope, is really too modest a claim to accomplish the expected result. For it does not imply the fullness of the prophetic charisma. Properly, it is no gift or charisma at all, but merely a providential protection from error. It is not claimed for the infallible Pope that he and his predecessors have revealed to the world the body of doctrine which is now found in the Church, or that he could originate or reveal any new doctrine. All that he does is to legalize the tradition. Such a body of doctrine existed independently of Councils and Popes, as the expression of a universal Christian experience. It was an experience before it became a tradition, and nothing but the constant renewal of such an experience can give permanence to the dogma.

I am not disposed to think that this or any other device for legalizing the truth is either capable of preserving it or necessary for its preservation. It is *possible* within certain limits to impose restrictions upon the

teaching of the clergy, but not upon the beliefs of the laity. For them the law has no effective sanctions. And I suppose no one will affirm that dogma is made more attractive to the unbeliever by the fact that it is enforced by law. But it is only by attracting the unbeliever that the Church is greatly "edified". I grant that the unbeliever is often attracted by a dogma that is enforced, but I feel sure that it is not the enforcement that counts, but the concordance of belief. I confess that I am greatly comforted in my own belief in the Christian dogma by the fact that in an age and atmosphere which is most unfriendly to it multitudes do accept the faith without any compulsion in the world except their need and the conviction formed in them by experience.

With regard to the question whether compulsion be in any wise necessary, I interrogate my own experience. I belong to a Church which legally imposes on me certain doctrines. I do not know precisely what they are. But once in a while when I happen to reflect that this or the other doctrine is legally imposed upon me I experience a motion of rebellion. I ask myself whether this feeling is an expression of my contrariness. I am disposed to think rather that it is prompted by a scruple of conscience: I wonder if I really believe; I am aware that I do not believe anything with the conviction I should like to have. But such experiences are rare: I recall them with some difficulty. What I would remark about them is, that compulsion, so far from making it easier for me to believe, has made it more difficult. When I have forgotten about the compulsion I have no longer any doubt that I believe. I am aware rather that I cannot help believing. I find within me a very different sort of compulsion that really compels. This is not the blind

compulsion of habit, for the faith I hold now is very different from the faith I held as a boy. I do not need to be compelled from without: I desire to believe. Tradition has for me no suggestion of legal compulsion, but I wish to believe what the Church believes, what it has always believed. I am often ill at ease for the fact that I cannot believe it all. That is of course impossible, for not all the doctors of the Church agree, and I cannot believe contradictory things. I wish I might believe all that the Roman Church requires one to believe. There is nothing obviously contradictory within that body of doctrine; but I know so many things without it that are contradictory to it, — and some of these things without it are *within* the tradition of the Church. This I say about myself, assuming that substantially the same thing is true of every man.

The Creeds are properly to be regarded as a summary expression of the Christian faith which all Christians share. So regarded, they can appropriately be used in common worship and can joyfully be recited by all. But if, beside this (or rather instead of this), they are treated as articles of a legal code, they have no proper place in worship. Wherever there is a disposition to regard them in this light — as a precise and detailed prescription of what every member and office-bearer in the Church *must* believe — they awaken a scrupulous mood which is incongruous with worship, which checks devotion, and has a tendency rather to divide than to unite a congregation. This consequence is inevitable if outside the hour of common worship the Creeds are treated as a principle article of the criminal code by which any man is liable to be tried and convicted. If the Creeds are a part of the criminal law, it would seem reasonable that every phrase

should be equally pressed and “strictly construed” (since that is the rule of criminal procedure), though in this case it might not be to the advantage of the defendant. But the creeds are also regarded as historical documents, and therefore the effort is made to construe them in the sense they may be presumed to have had for the original framers. So they get you coming and going. If the Creed is regarded in this light, I cannot wonder that many are dumb when it is recited in the Church, not because they are over-scrupulous in conscience or feeble of heart, but because they are jealous of their honour. They may well feel that, if the Creed is to be interjected at all in public worship, it should be pronounced in menacing tones by the minister, and after each clause the people should be permitted to cry aloud, Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our minds to believe this creed. The Decalogue may also be regarded as a part of the criminal law of the Church, but the recitation of it is not so dreadful as the recitation of the Creed. This is not because men are less likely to be prosecuted under it, but because it is *not* interpreted literally (as, for example, the prescription of rest on the *Sabbath*), because the people do not themselves recite it with complacency, and because it is not assumed that the breach of any single precept — in the broad and spiritual construction which Jesus applied to the Law — would rightly involve a sentence of excommunication. I have no enthusiasm for reciting the Ten Commandments in public worship. So far as we know, it was never done in the Church before the Reformation. There is only one document which suggests even that it might have been used in the early Church as a basis for catechetical instruction. I *do* like to recite the Creed in worship. But I remember that *this* too was not the

custom of the Primitive or of the early Catholic Church. It goes without saying that the so-called Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (of which we have no mention before the middle of the fifth century) was not used in the Liturgy before it was formulated. Neither does the Roman Church now require that it be repeated on *every* occasion when the Mass is said. In fact ours is the only Church in Christendom which celebrates no act of public worship without the recitation of a creed. It may seem as if this usage had been established among us by accident at the time of the Reformation; but really it is profoundly Protestant in spirit, and the reason why extremist Protestant sects do not commonly use these creeds in worship is not because they object to creeds but because they are shy of using Catholic creeds. It is interesting to note how profoundly Protestant are many persons who think themselves Catholics. They are scandalized at the suggestion that the Decalogue might be omitted from the Liturgy — though it was never thus used till the sixteenth century. They are horrified at the proposal to exclude the Creeds from public worship — though they were never so used before the fifth century in the Liturgy, or perhaps before the twelfth century in the offices. To me, this proposition seems neither surprising nor scandalous. The Creeds cannot properly be used as a part of the worship of the Church if they are treated at the same time as legal maxims. On the other hand, we cannot now eject them from the place they have long occupied without incurring the suspicion that we are determined to reject the Christian faith, — and that would preclude all hope of reunion, not only with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches but also with the conservative sections of Protestantism. It is vain and even ludicrous

to suppose that the whole of Christendom might be induced to accept some more modern creed. The Catholic Creeds are an unique and historical fact. Nothing will ever replace them. But the abuse of them might conceivably deplace them, and to this end many are working with both hands earnestly who imagine that they are exalting and defending the Creeds.

Such considerations as these, even if they seem persuasive, will hardly countervail the objections of those who are obsessed by the belief that unless the Creeds can be pressed as a legal instance we shall be impotent to exclude unbelievers from the Church. But with our legal methods have we in fact succeeded in accomplishing this desirable aim? Is not now the legal procedure, or even a threat of it, the chief obstacle to success? By its subtlety and *formality* it confuses the substantial issue and rallies generous minds to the defence of the accused, who might be the first to break off communion with him if, with no pettifogging about creeds and phrases, the question were clearly put: Is the man a Christian? does he hold substantially the Christian faith? For that *is* the substantial issue. A sect or a religious club may have other reason for excluding men from its membership, but the Church can have only this one reason, that a man is not a Christian. This is a question which men cannot infallibly decide, whether by legal process or without it. Nevertheless it is a simple question — it is simple at all events in the sense that the unlearned Christian can judge of it as aptly as the lawyer or the theologian. My conviction is that the Christian *people* may be trusted to deal with heresy more conclusively than a court of law, — though perhaps not so leniently and doubtless not always fairly. But it is a condition, not a theory, that confronts

us now. The fact is that a trial for heresy is now very nearly impossible, and when it succeeds in its practical and specific intent it is often shorn of all moral authority.

It is reasonable to require that Christian *pastors* shall have — not indeed a greater faith than the simple sheep of their flock, but — a more explicit faith. It is deplorable that any person should occupy the position of teacher who is himself either uninstructed in the Christian faith, or doubtful about it, or superior to it. This is clearly a pathological symptom, against which an ounce of prevention would be worth a pound of cure. There has not yet been discovered a specific cure for this disease. The legal method of treatment is certainly not successful. I am inclined to trust the organism to develop spontaneously the “anti-bodies” which will insure its immunity. I have already adverted to the fact that, practically, the pastor is subjected to the law of popular referendum and recall. But the operation of this *natural law* is impeded by the intervention of a juridical authority. The substantial issue is obscured, and equity is flagrantly perverted, if a judicial condemnation of a *pastor* is based upon a strict construction of the Baptismal Creed which no one would think of enforcing against a simple member of the Church. The confession of faith made in behalf of the child at Baptism and “renewed” by the youth at Confirmation cannot have one meaning for the layman and another for the man who subsequently becomes a clergyman. It is by no means an impossible case that a clergyman has substantially renounced the Christian faith, but it is not by this method you can ascertain the fact of his apostasy. For if it be conceded that a layman may be a good Christian in spite of the fact that he does not believe *every* article of the “Apostles’ Creed” in the sense that the judicial

authority prescribes, the clergyman is not proved a bad Christian by the same fact. Sufficient *legal* ground for criminal procedure can be found in the obligation to "minister the Doctrine of Christ as this Church hath received the same". But that is true only because "*this Church*" is a legal conception. If we think in terms of the universal Church, of Christendom — as we are bound to do when we are considering the possibility of Church unity — this legal conception of the particular Church is obviously irrelevant. It is of the utmost importance that we find some way to "banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine"; but it is very much to be doubted, after the experience of two millenniums, whether the legal way is an efficient way of accomplishing it. If at the same time we find it necessary to drive away "erroneous and strange" *persons*, the legal method may precariously succeed in the particular Church, but has no relevance whatever to the Church universal.

Theoretical divergencies are most deplorable when they involve morality. Here they come to so practical an issue that we find difficulty in regarding them as theoretical. And of course *morality* does not mean opinion but action. Ethics, however, is theory, and moral precepts are opinions, and our opinions about these very practical matters trace their origin to theological definitions, — namely, to the answer which we give to such questions as, What is God? What is man? What is the chief end of man? This last question requires us also to consider what are the mediate ends we must accomplish in order to attain our destiny. That is the question of morals.

The early Church, even in the Catholic period, drew

no sharp distinction between faith and morals. I feel sure that we have drawn too sharp a distinction. Jesus was at least as insistent upon right conduct as upon a right idea of God. I think it would not be false to say that Jesus above everything else was a moralist, though it is certain that below everything else was his faith in God and that this was the foundation of everything else.

Denominational controversy about theological dogma has had the effect of diverting attention from Christian morals and disparaging the importance of the subject. Medieval Christendom had an accurate and precise code of morals in which the people were diligently instructed. It was one of the principal functions of medieval art to impart this instruction through the eye, and very tellingly it depicted the seven deadly sins and the cardinal and theological virtues. These things have no place in our catechism, and even persons of light and leading would find difficulty in reciting these lists. We may affect to dispise these categories as crude. But the point is that we have no others to put in their place for the purposes of popular instruction. The calamity is that we have no concordant precepts about morals which we can name as we name our hands our own, subject to no dispute.

Even if we were confident and clear and concordant about the principles of morals and their application, we should suck from this but small advantage so long as we lack a convincing way of asserting them (I do not say, of enforcing them) before the world and before the children of the Church. For while we are divided in theological opinions the authority of the Church is discounted in all fields. The Roman Church suffers as we do, in spite of its claim of authority, for it is well known to the children of that Church that other Churches think differently.

Protestant Propaganda in Roman Catholic lands helps to undermine the authority of that Church while it sets up no other effective authority. There is in fact no plausible reason to suppose that Christianity, being divided in its witness to the truths of theology, will prove a sure guide in questions of conduct. Even a general agreement about matters of faith and morals would not help us much so long as we are formally divided. For a divided Church has no mouth or language by which to proclaim its teaching. This is the great tragedy of the Babel of religious divisions. For want of an authoritative voice speaking no uncertain language private morality is deprived of a needed support and the stability of our social life is threatened. For it is not only or chiefly the ethical life of the individual that is at stake, but the structure of human society and civilization. The divided Church cannot make up its mind what it ought to say about the questions essential to the family life, or about political morality, or about the relations between states, or between the several classes of society. These questions press for an answer, but no one will listen to the Churches or to the ministers of the Church even when they make bold to speak. Until with one heart and with one mouth we can glorify God we shall not be able with one mouth to instruct the world.

Yet this is a sphere where *authority* is in place, for authority is characteristic of the moral precept. And it is an essential idea of the Church that each individual is not to be left to climb alone the steep ascent of heaven. Somehow or another we manage to stumble on, "following the upward calling of Christ Jesus". But St. Paul tells us (Phil. 3: 16), that we have received our marching orders and are expected to "march in ranks".

The attainment of a whole and united faith which I

contemplate in this chapter as desirable and necessary is evidently not near. We must slowly *grow* together in this direction. For this reason it cannot be regarded as the starting point of Church reunion. I regard it rather as a goal, and therefore I put it last among the problems of Church unity. It is to be reached only through common worship and a common fellowship in Christ. With what faith we now have in common let us unite in worship and in work. God has unimaginable ways of bringing unity about — of making men of one mind in a house.

The most complete agreement in opinion does not mean unity, if it is unaccompanied by love; and love can cement a union in spite of profound differences of opinion. As Christians we have not enough love for one another to overcome our divisions. We are never so hypocritical as when we pretend that the present divisions of Christendom do not hinder love of the brethren. Even within the bounds of our denomination we do not love one another enough, but towards those outside of it we hardly feel that we owe any love. When this duty is brought to our attention we eagerly profess that we love all the brethren, but we plainly belie this profession by the cruel and unjust judgment we pass upon all who are not of our own denomination. We like to dwell upon their faults and we grudgingly admit their qualities. We judge them by standards which we do not apply to ourselves and which we resent when they are applied to us. The zeal which we note with complacency in our own communion we condemn in others. If the Roman Church is successful in getting money for the maintenance of religion or for works of charity, we do not ascribe this (as we would in our own case) to the devotion of the people, but to the rapacity of the priests. If the Methodists show

zeal for the spread of their Gospel, we call it proselytism. If the Baptists are strenuous in maintaining their traditional beliefs, we call this a narrow conservatism. Just now many are fearful lest, in spite of the prestige of British diplomacy, the Vatican may succeed, before we do, in effecting a *rapprochement* with the Eastern Churches, so we stigmatize its efforts as intrigue. Few have so pure a desire for Church unity that they can contemplate with satisfaction a union between the Roman and the Eastern Churches. We do not love one another because we do not know one another. Our prejudices prevent us from understanding our brethren. We are moving in a vicious circle: we do not love enough because we are divided; we remain divided because we do not love enough. It is vain to exhort Christians to love one another more broadly, unless we first enable them to know and understand one another. We need more light. The greatest obstacle to reunion is the prejudice which separates us. This bars the way to reunion at the very start. For we are inclined to doubt if Christians who follow customs very different from our own can be good Christians. Such a doubt quenches all desire to be united with them. Most Protestants in America think that the "Episcopalians", because they have forms, have only a formal religion: We on our part (if we will tell the truth to ourselves) are inclined to think that those who have arid customs of worship can have no deep spirit of religion.

All this is referable to the fact that we do not love enough. But before love must come enlightenment. Though it requires some love to draw us together, and much meekness of love to keep us in subjection to one another, we cannot expect to reach our full stature in love until we *are* united.

Therefore I shall say no more about brotherly love, but turn now rather to that quality of love which God shows towards us and bids us imitate. I mean, the quality of mercy or loving-kindness. For, according to the Synoptic Gospels, the ideal which Jesus set before his disciples was not so much the love of one another as the indiscriminate love towards all who are in need, and especially towards such as are in need of our forgiveness. This is characteristic of the love which God displays towards man: "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust". The ideal here proposed to us is nothing less than the imitation of God in his kindness "to the unthankful and the evil". Only those who imitate the heavenly Father are in any real sense his sons, for sonship implies likeness. "A chip of the old block", is an adage applied to the sons of men: it is salutary for us to apply it to our filial relation to God. Therefore the injunction is, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"; and, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Mt 5: 44-48; Lk 6: 27-36).

Generally we are ready to confess that we do not love the brethren as we ought, but we like to believe that in works of mercy we are very much united as Christians, in spite of our divisions. If this belief were well founded, we should indeed be profoundly united. For Jesus counted mercifulness the most authentic evidence of a man's status as a son of God. This rule for the trying of spirits runs athwart the lines of race, religion and creed. A Samaritan may by a single work of mercy give evidence that he is a son of God, while a Jewish priest gives evidence that he is not. Profession of faith in Jesus is not so sure a test as is the evidence of a merciful disposition. "Not

every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he who doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven ” (Mt 7 : 21 ; 25 : 31-46). If we ourselves are merciful, we shall feel instinctively drawn to all that are such ; and we have good warrant in the very words of Jesus for following this impulse and recognizing them as brethren, however much they may seem to differ from us in belief. If they are to enter into the Kingdom of heaven, it is only as sons of God that they can enter ; and if their sonship now is not fully apparent, we must recognize them as God’s hidden servants.

This need cause no embarrassment to any Christian who is not a systematic theologian. But we do find reason for embarrassment when we observe that in ordinary works of “ charity ” believers and unbelievers are equally united. This gives rise to the suspicion that mercy is not closely and necessarily related to faith. It might seem even as if it were not clearly related to character, for bad men are often as liberal with their wealth as are the good. In view of these facts, the reiterated claim that all Christian denominations are really united in good works leaves us cold. We do not really *feel* it, for we are obscurely aware that it proves too much. The fact is that “ charity ” and works of beneficence in general have been so thoroughly secularized that they seem no longer to be the outcome of religion. Historically, however, it can be asserted that the quality of mercy, with all the works which spring from it, was a product of religion and appeared only in conjunction with the highest religions. “ I will have mercy and not sacrifice ” (Hos. 6 : 16 ; Mt 12 : 7), is a word which could not have been uttered or understood among men before the dawn of the great prophetic movement in Israel which antedated all the higher religions

of the world. And it is evident that in Christendom works of mercy originated in the Church.

Students of ancient religions have amassed many curious proofs to the effect that, up to the time when science began its autonomous development, all the principal increments of civilization were due directly to religion. The list begins with cookery and dress (with smoking even, it is averred), with writing and the first rudiments of learning. Religion furnished the idea of the state and its only effective sanction, and it led even to the discovery of the sciences. For my part I am not inclined to press these claims in favour of religion; for if we greatly exalt these effects of religion, we give the impression that they represent its principal aim; and if this were so, we must confess that religion has been superseded by other activities of the mind better able to affect such aims. In fact, these contributions to civilization were the by-products of religion, and once they were produced they could be left to the secular interest which knew how to prize and develop them. Religion had other things to do, other goods to create, other boons to bestow.

But with regard to works of mercy the case is not precisely the same. They are so characteristically the outcome of religion, and as an imitation of God they are so dependent upon a knowledge of him and a knowledge of him as merciful, that we can hardly expect them to flourish apart from faith.

And, in fact, we can observe that good works as they are fostered by a purely secular interest apart from faith tend to lose the quality of mercy, "which falleth like a gentle dew from heaven". *Indiscriminate* charity is *tabu* to the secular religion. "Institutional charity" can get along without love and it condemns mercy. The classical

political economy and Marxian socialism are united in nothing except the repudiation of mercy, and the theory of biological evolution when it is applied to human society with ravin shrieks against this creed.

We should be spared some perplexity were we to note a distinction which Jesus makes, but which our English translation of the Gospels completely ignores. Jesus expected his disciples to do "good works", such as the Pharisees did for merit or for ostentation. He acknowledged even that good works were meritorious, but he disparaged this as the motive for their performance. Almsgiving was then, as it is now, the representative instance of good works. The Jews called it "righteousness" *pare excellence*. The Greek word for alms (the word which we have in the Gospels and which we have anglicized in the adjective *eleemosynary*) means simply *mercy*. Ridiculously contracting this long word into *alms*, we have squeezed out the mercy, — as in our use of the word "charity" (though formally it still resembles the Latin *caritas*) we have left out the love. But this, in fact, is no innovation of ours. It was the lack of love and mercy as the motive of good works which inclined Jesus to speak coldly of such practices. He assumed that they would be done, but he did not enjoin them. He enjoined only that when they were done they should be done with such secrecy that the left hand might not know what the right hand was doing (Mt 6: 1-4). But with regard to "beautiful deeds" (καλὰ ἔργα) his injunction was precisely to the contrary effect (Mt 5: 16): "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your beautiful deeds and glorify your Father which is in heaven". Here there is no contradiction, for a beautiful deed is something quite different from a good work. The idea of beauty which is

original to the Greek word ought not to be totally ignored. Our English version of several of Jesus' sayings would be improved by observing this distinction. In Lk 8: 15 Jesus did not speak of an *honest* and good heart, but of "beautiful and good heart", and in Mt 7: 17 he says that "a good tree beareth *fair* fruit". If we seek to know what Jesus meant by a beautiful deed, we have the instance of the woman who broke an alabaster cruse of pistic nard, very costly, that she might anoint the Lord's head (Mk 14: 3-9). Some who were present observed justly that this was not a *good work*, for it was a waste of what might have been sold for much money to give to the poor. But Jesus characterized it as a beautiful deed. "She hath done to me a beautiful deed", he said. And he proceeded to say, "Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her". Here we have again the recognition that a beautiful deed ought not to be hid, — in fact cannot be hid, any more than one can hide a light or a lofty city. It is like a beautiful flower, which is meant to be seen because it is the revelation of a soul. This comparison suggests what is the distinctive quality of a beautiful deed: it is an impulsive and revealing act of love. That is the reason why it ought to be seen, — "That men may, by your beautiful deeds that they behold, glorify God" (1, Pet. 2: 12). "He that desireth the (conspicuous and difficult) office of a bishop desires a beautiful work", says St. Paul (1 Tim. 3: 1); and he expects Titus, who was something more than a bishop, to be "an example of beautiful deeds" (Titus 2: 7). The rest of us, though we are not bishops, are nevertheless expected to "provoke one another to love and beautiful deeds" (Heb. 10: 24).

Good works are more frequently spoken of in the New Testament but never so highly extolled. They are to be distinguished from beautiful deeds not so much by the motive that prompts them as by the fact that the latter are spontaneous revelations of the soul. It is quite proper that good works should become habitual, but they also become conventional. There can be no doubt that the motives prompting to good works are various and do not always include love and mercy. Men do good works because it is reputable to do them, or because it is meritorious. Good works are not infrequently done as an expiation of sin; so that at the sight of costly Churches or immense hospitals one is sometimes prompted to exclaim shudderingly, What sinners these men must have been! But when I speak of the extrusion of mercy from good works I am not thinking principally of the grosser manifestations of egoism. Most good works are done with a view to benefitting society in general; or if they directly benefit a particular class, it is not so much for the sake of that class they are done, or for the needy individuals which compose it, as for the sake of society as a whole. If there is a sore spot in the body which cannot be excised, it must be cured, for the sake of the body. The pursuit of "the greatest good of the greatest number" is clearly not selfishness, but neither is it mercy.

This distinction explains how it is that when we unite in good works we are not always united thereby. Christianity has made it reputable to do good, it has even made it customary. But when works of love and mercy are divorced from faith they suffer a tendency to perversion: the works go on as by inertia, though love and mercy fail. We are united not by the good works which we do, but by the common motive, which prompts them;

and if there is no common motive, we are not united. Without faith, mercy itself loses its quality. While good works without faith may be only an example of hardness and force, mercy apart from faith is often a weakness, and for this reason many judge that it is inconsistent with justice.

If as Christians we are to be united through works of love and mercy, it must be by such mercy as God bestows upon us. And it is easy to detect the lack of this quality in our good works. We have only to ask whether our zeal for good works includes the disposition to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, to bless them that persecute us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us. *This* is defined as being merciful even as our Father is merciful (Lk 6 : 28-36). Without this disposition no works of mercy will really unite us. Therefore it is not in this way *first* of all that we can reasonably expect to be reunited.

But there is another quality of love which is in place at the very beginning of any effort after reunion. I mean the *meekness* of love. If we do not regard meekness as a quality of love, we fail completely to understand it (1). To "turn the other cheek" is an instance of meekness only if it is an instance of love — otherwise it is a peculiarly odious hypocrisy. In fact, this word is commonly associated in our minds with hypocrisy. We judge it impossible honestly to fulfil the injunction (Phil. 2 : 3), that each should count others better than himself. This appears to require of us a *false* opinion of ourselves, for

(1) To understand this word we must follow its history in the Old and New Testaments. See my Church and its organization pp. 159-162.

it is manifest that *all* cannot actually be worse than everybody else. The Quakers, and more recently Tolstoi, in a legalistic spirit which they would rebuke in others, insist upon the performance of "meek" actions simply because they are prescribed in the Gospel. It is probable that most of us do not like this virtue, do not really regard it as a virtue, and do not purpose to imitate it.

But here we are confronted by the fact that St. Paul accounted this trait the most memorable of the human traits of Jesus, for this is the only one which he records (2 Cor. 10: 1). And we must remember that Jesus invited his disciples to learn this disposition from him: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart" (Mt 11: 29). It cannot be that this is a contemptible quality which our Lord so conspicuously displayed. When once we seek to learn from him we discover that meekness is not equivalent to the monastic *humilitas*, which St. Bernard defined by the phrase, *verissima sui agnitione sibi ipse vilescat* (with a true knowledge of one's self to abhor one's self). Our modern piety is still profoundly impressed by the influence of this definition, — yet perhaps not impressed enough. It is evident, however, that these words do not apply to Jesus. It befits us to be humble, but it would not befit him, nor is there any instance recorded in which his "lowliness of mind" took the form of self-accusation and self-abhorrence. In point of fact, meekness is not a product of self-examination: it is simply self-abnegation. The words "yoke and burden" indicate Christ's meaning. Meekness does not mean concern about ourselves and all that we may find within ourselves, rather it means complete abstraction from self-regard, the attitude of one who has assumed the position of a *servant*. Only as

we realize in practice these implications of service, ignoring for the sake of others our own advantage, even the high advantage of saving our own souls (Mt. 16: 25; Rom. 9: 3), can we show meekness without hypocrisy, endure offences without feeling affronted, and fulfil the injunction of St. Paul to count others better than ourselves. For "better" in this instance means *more important*: it suggests no comparison of relative moral worth, but properly expresses the attitude of the true servant towards him whose welfare he has made his predominant aim.

This "ornament", as St. Paul calls it, "of a meek and quiet spirit" is necessary and effective above all other virtues for the maintenance of order and conformity in the Church, and for the restoration of unity when it has been broken. Pride is the sin of all dividers; and meekness alone can heal the wounds which they make.

As a matter of fact, the words "meekness" and "lowliness of mind" are used by St. Paul with reference especially to threatened disorder and nonconformity, whether in the individual congregation or in the Church at large. In Gal. 5: 23 and 1 Tim. 6: 11 the word "meekness" occurs simply in a list of the principal Christian virtues. In 2 Tim. 2: 25 and 1 Cor. 4: 21 it is mentioned as a special requisite for the official minister ("God's servant"), and it was plainly an indispensable requisite in the Apostolic Church, where obedience had to be *conciliated*, for lack of any law to enforce it. This, however is a virtue required no less of the ruled than of the rulers, and in 2 Cor. 10: 1 St. Paul's adjuration, "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ", introduces a long and earnest plea for the recognition of his Apostolic authority. In Gal. 3: 12-16 "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another"

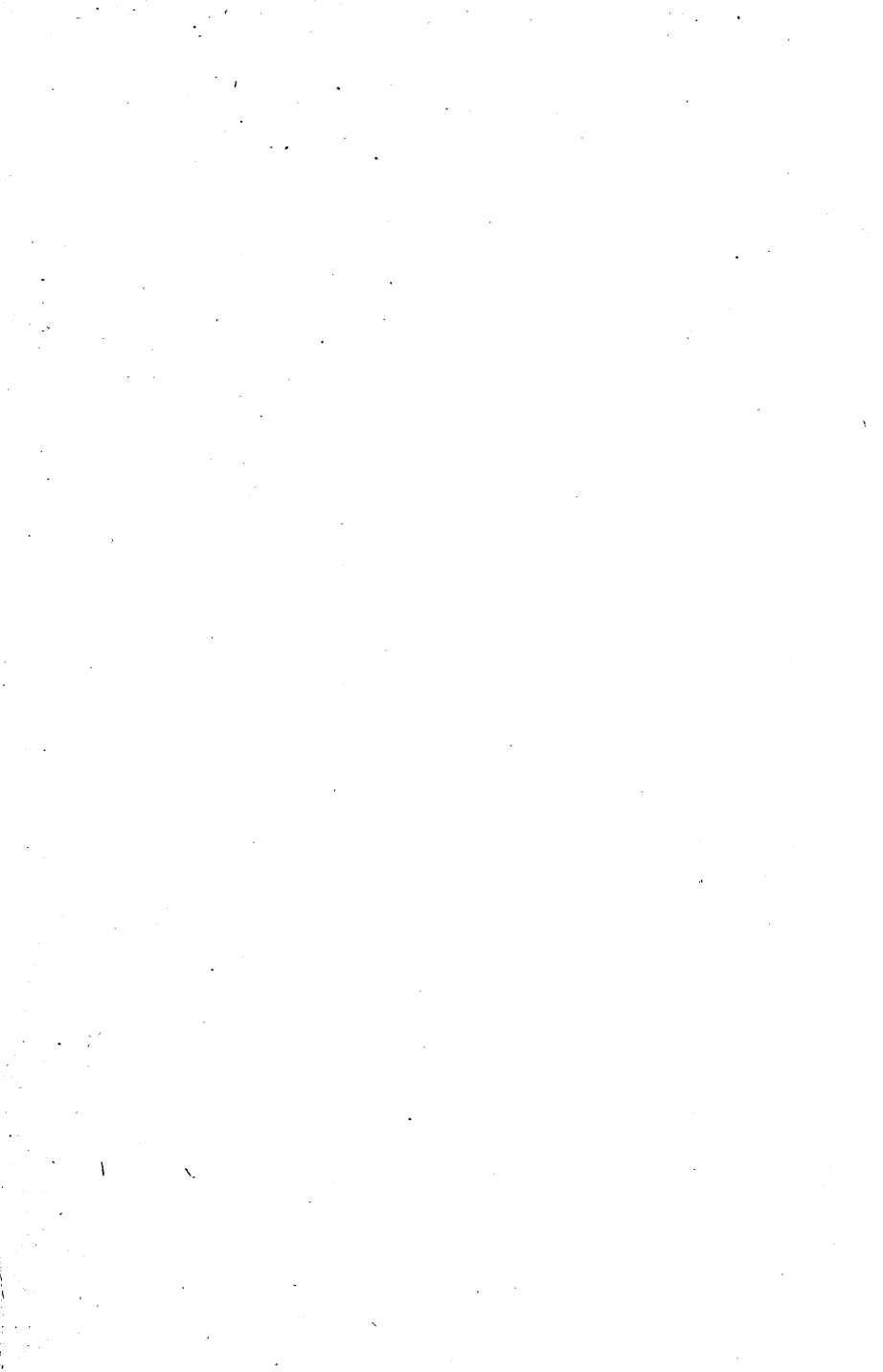
are mentioned as the means for preserving the unity of the Church (*vv.* 3-6) — “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”, “one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”. And in closest connection with this the organization of the Church is considered (*vv.* 7-16).

But the most remarkable use that St. Paul makes of this word we find in Phil. 2: 1-11. This passage is zealously exploited for the Christological dogma which it contains, without much reflecting that St. Paul here adduces the profoundest doctrines of his theology for the mere practical purpose of healing a petty faction which two women had started in the Church in Philippi. As the only cure for faction and vainglory, for the disposition of each to regard his own opinions as of pre-eminent importance, St. Paul prescribes lowliness of mind, a disposition to look also on the things of others, to count others more important than one's self. Our Lord himself invited his disciples to learn this disposition from him, and it is adequately defined only as it is exhibited in his person. Hence St. Paul here defines it as “*the mind which was in Christ Jesus*: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, even unto death, yea, the death of the cross”. All the force of this great dogma the Apostle converges in one practical point and directs to the apparently incommensurate aim of healing a petty schism in the congregation.

If the example of Christ -- the thought of his Incarnation, the lowliness of his human station, and the cross

itself — cannot beget lowliness of mind in his disciples, if the Holy Spirit is impotent to evoke in the brotherhood the spirit of fellowship, and if meekness proves ineffectual to bring about order, conformity and peace in the Church, what other powers or motives have we to rely upon? Can fear be expected to accomplish in the Church what love cannot effect? force and law, what the Holy Ghost cannot do? It might be urged that all these powers and motives are effective but that they need law as an *auxiliary*. This, however, is an auxiliary which weakens the force of love and of all the religious motives. St. Paul knew no law in the Church to compel peace, and therefore he relied solely upon the religious and moral appeal. “If there be any exhortation in Christ, if any incitement of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender-mercies and compassions, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself . . . Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”.

THE END



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